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THE

CONFESSOR

A JESUIT TALE
OF THE TIMES.

By the Author of 'Michael Cassidy.'

WITH PREFACE BY THE

REV. C. B. TAYLER, M.A.

& RIVER

LONDON: CLARKE, BEETON, AND CO.

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FOR
RAILWAY, ROAD, AND RIVER.

• ANNOUNCEMENT.

IF ever there was a time when the saying received fulfilment, that 'many shall *run to and fro*, and knowledge shall be increased,' it is in the present day, when the Rail, the Road, and the River are teeming with intelligent beings; and the unprecedented demand for cheap literature plainly shows that they who run will read. Dr. Johnson truly says, 'he by whose writings the *heart is rectified* and the *passions repressed*, may be considered as not unprofitable to the great republic of humanity'; and yet amongst all the series of reading for the million how little comes within the Doctor's definition! 'Works of Imagination,' says Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe, 'are found not only in the library of the rich, but on the counter, in the workshop, in the tavern, in the steam boat, and the railway car—the great evil is, that the worst stands about an equal chance with the best. *Shall persons professing to be regulated by right principles give up reading all works of Fiction?* There are *many advantages to be gained* by reading books of this class, if *properly selected*. It is not only right, but it is a duty, at certain intervals, to relieve the intellect and feelings from care and effort, and devote a certain portion of time to works of mere recreation and amusement; and the most elevating and the most refining of all amusements is the exercise of the imagination. Such considerations have inspired the conviction that persons who have the taste, invention, sprightliness, humor, and command of diction that qualifies for a successful novelist, may become the greatest of public benefactors by skilfully providing the *healthful aliment*, that may be employed in supplanting the pernicious leaven.'

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THE CONFESSOR:

**A JESUIT TALE OF THE TIMES: FOUNDED
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By the Author of 'Michael Cassidy,' with Preface by the
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I was then informed that, in removing me from my heretical husband, they complied with a decree of the church. [page 231.]



THE CONFESSOR:

A

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FOUNDED ON FACT.

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WITH PREFACE BY THE

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PREFACE.

A POPULAR French author has remarked that, among the Jesuits, 'The direction and the government of women is the vital part of priestly power.' 'Marriage,' he also declares, 'goes for nothing, effects nothing, unless there is a third party always present between the united couple—to separate them.' 'It was generally supposed,' he adds, with a cool sarcasm, 'that but two persons were required for a marriage. This is changed: here is the new system, as they themselves expound it. Three elements compose it. 1st. Man; the strong—the violent. 2ndly. Woman; a being by nature weak. 3rdly. The Priest, born a man, and strong, but quite

willing to make himself weak, to resemble the woman; and thus, by participating, alternately, in the nature of the one and the other, he is able to interpose between them.' In the narrative which follows, the authoress has set before her readers a striking illustration of the above remarks of Michelet. The facts of the story happened under the author's own observation; and she justly thought that to clothe them, as she has skilfully done, in the form of a story of touching and thrilling interest, was a good use to make of them. She has given both a lesson and a warning, peculiarly needed in these times.

That religion which is drawn from the pure Word of Divine truth, in the Holy Bible, is as opposed—as light to darkness—to the principles and practice of Jesuitism.

The love of power, and the love of money, are the secret springs of a system, which, to accomplish its ends, resorts to means the most unscrupulous, and masks itself under the garb of a super-

eminent sanctity. What a libel upon the religion, 'pure and undefiled,' of Him of whom His inspired apostle Peter has left this record (1 Peter ii, 22): 'that guile was not found in His mouth;' and of whose followers we also read (Rev. xiv, 5): 'In their mouth was found no guile.'

The reader need scarcely be told that there is nothing improbable in the circumstances which are related in the following pages. Unhappily for our once favored country, the arts and wiles of the Jesuits are spreading throughout all ranks of society; and, from time to time, some case like that of Miss Talbot, or Margaret Griffith, or Miss Knight, or that of the two young ladies who were lately removed from Preston, finds its way into the public newspapers, and proves to us what is secretly going on all the while, wherever the Jesuits are at work. The Rev. Dr. Armstrong of Bermondsey, in a letter which he published in 'The Times' newspaper, not many months ago, gives an affecting account of a young man—one of the many converts from Romanism.

in that part of London under his ministry—who died from the effect of the blows which he received from a set of ruffians, stirred up by their Priest. Such is the course of action of the Jesuits; sometimes soft, smooth, insidious — sometimes coarse, brutal, violent—anything, everything, that can be done with impunity, and which also is done, and permitted to be done, with impunity; for it is scarcely to be credited how shamefully such excesses are passed over and winked at by those in authority.

Were one instance to occur of a clergyman of our Church—or one of our Dissenting ministers—cursing or beating those who have left their flocks, or inciting others to acts of brutal and fiendlike malignity against them, such as are common in Ireland, and beginning, as we see, to occur in England—the whole empire would ring with denunciations of that man's name. We thank God that it is so! The fact is, in itself, a silent tribute to the pure faith, and upright and gentle spirit, of

the Protestant ministry. In further and stronger confirmation of what I have stated, I would refer the reader to the account published by the Rev. Pierce Connelly, in which he proves that facts are often more strange than fiction. 'I have known a husband,' he says, 'taught to deal double, in the sacred matter of religion, with his high-born wife; a brother with his own high-born sisters; wives with their husbands; and daughters, without number, with their trusting parents.' That in this free and Protestant country, a wife should be withheld from her own husband, and separated from her children; that he should be forbidden to see her, or hold any communication with her; that all his remonstrances should be unheeded—all his efforts baffled; and that this state of things should have continued from the year 1848 up to the present month of December, 1853, seems almost incredible: but such is actually the case. We certainly live in strange times—times of a strangely morbid tenderness to the glaring errors, and shameful perse-

cutions, of the apostate Church of Rome, if such doings can be long tolerated among the Protestants of England.

Many of the circumstances of the narrative now presented to the reader may be fiction, but the facts have their parallel passages in daily life, and are according to truth. Let no one, therefore, suppose that the characters of the two Confessors—the coarse and swaggering Irish Priest, or the refined and elegant French Confessor—or that the persecutions, and sorrows, and temporary insanity of the sweet and gentle Clotilde, are imaginary pictures.

CHARLES B. TAYLER.

OTLEY RECTORY,
December, 1853.

INTRODUCTION.

THE reader who may honor 'THE CONFESSOR' with a perusal, cannot fail to perceive in it a forcible but faithful illustration of the genius and character of Papal tyranny.

It is impossible for any reflecting man not to be startled at the progress the Romish Church is making in every quarter. The restoration of the Jesuits; the virulent opposition to the toleration established in many continental states; the arrogant pretensions of Rome respecting the question of mixed marriages; her refusal of the rites of the Church to whomsoever would not submit to *all* his or her children being brought up in the faith—all furnish the proof that she is as anxious as ever to extend her borders, to usurp in every land the supremacy first conceded by an earthly potentate, and as determined as ever to maintain the ancient system with inflexible rigor. The interference of the magistrate for the suppression and punishment of heresy is still enjoined upon the conscience of every Roman Catholic as an indispensable obligation. We must be ignorant—we must

persist in closing our eyes to all that is going on in the world—not to be aware of this.

But were events dumb, instead of speaking trumpet-tongued, we might still be sure that the persecuting maxims of Popery are still in force. The contrary would be an *impossibility* in a religion founded on the assumption of an infallible exemption from error—an assumption which obviously admits of no degree or modification. None of the claims of Rome, however absurd, intolerant, or impious, will ever be suffered to slumber and gradually die out, until Popery renounces its precise and rigid definition of the infallibility of the Church.

The following pages are written in no uncharitable or unchristian spirit. The heroine, a Roman Catholic, is an admitted favorite of the writer; all the traits of her interesting disposition are described *con amore*; and if, in the progress of the story, the Protestant should discover what he conceives to be a shade in the perfection of Clotilde's character, the Roman Catholic reader will doubtless regard it as the 'one star sparkling through it like an eye'—the crowning glory that hallows the picture—the key-note to the harmony of the piece.

Be it delusion, or be it the height of human virtue, Lady Trevillion suffers her obedience to her church to destroy her peace, to compromise her honor, and to be the means of involving all she holds dear in her own wretchedness and ruin. Step by step, darkling, and in anguish of heart, is she driven on by a machinery that no faithful Romanist could possibly resist.

Nor let the reader delude himself into the belief

that, in our liberal and enlightened times, such prostration of the will, such sufferings of the heart as those offered at the shrine of religious duty by this devoted woman, can never be demanded—that such a tragedy as the scenes of ‘THE CONFESSOR’ disclose can never be reënacted. The contrary is, undoubtedly, the case. The trials of Lady Trevillion are daily paralleled in a thousand instances; though, of course, the accident of her having married a *heretic* husband must be taken into account, and the exquisite sensibility of her nature may be supposed to give peculiar point to her distress.

Relying upon the assumed irresistible advances of the human intellect, there is a prevailing disposition to contemplate the doctrines of Popery with less disgust, and to witness their progress with less alarm, than has ever been known since the Reformation. In this fancied enlightenment we place our security against the recurrence of the enormous cruelties of the Papal system; and, under the same mask, we shelter our indifference to religious truth. According to the vain and shallow reasoning so much in fashion, it were a libel to apprehend that the ‘form of godliness,’ combined with a total ‘denial of its power,’ could ever again be generally professed in enlightened England. It is out of the question, now that information is so general—so runs the argument of these superficial people—that a heap of unmeaning ceremonies adapted to engage the senses; that implicit faith in human authority, combined with an utter neglect of divine teaching; that ignorance the most profound, joined to dogmatism the most presumptuous; an exclusion of biblical

knowledge, joined to an extinction of free inquiry, should again be submitted to by the enlightened subjects of Queen Victoria. It is idle, they say, for people who are basking in the sunshine of rational knowledge, and who observe on all sides the prevalence of vital Christianity, to dread its decadence, still less its total extinction. What! would it be possible, in the age of Penny Magazines, for the votaries of the Papal See to administer, as they did formerly in this country, the affairs of their *established* church on the corruptest principles of worldly policy—to give to superstition the semblance and sanction of religion—to enslave the mental faculties to human authority? ‘*Risum teneatis, amici?*’ That such a consummation is not only possible, but highly probable, under certain circumstances—which God in His mercy avert!—may be gathered from the fact that, in these (so-called) intelligent and enlightened times, notwithstanding that we meet with nothing partaking of the nature of a solid concession from Rome, though we find no steps retraced, no errors revoked, no pretensions disclaimed, no protest opposed to the persecuting maxims of former ages—yet we take for granted that intolerance is expunged from the Papal creed, and view ‘trifles light as air,’—professions of liberality issuing from the lips of unaccredited agents—the courtesy, urbanity, and address of unofficial individuals—we look on these as ‘confirmation strong as proofs of holy writ.’

It is to be hoped—although the members of the Romish community are, at this moment, indulging the most sanguine hopes, suggested by the credulous temper of the times—that Popery will never be

permitted again to darken and overspread the land; but, if such a calamity should be consistent with the inscrutable counsels of Heaven, it is by no means certain that conscientious Romanists would not rekindle the fires of Smithfield, because persecution unto death is an unrepealed mandate of their church,—an ‘act of faith,’ of imperative obligation; and, what is more, would evince, according to their creed, the height of Christian duty. But, waiving this point, and laying no stress upon the circumstance of the strong-mindedness in which we trust, having actually accelerated the doom of Latimer and Ridley, and other martyrs, it may be as well to inquire whether this alleged superiority of understanding be not, in point of fact, a misconception—a mere chimera. We know that, from the accession of Edward the Sixth to the Protectorate of Cromwell, ‘there were giants in the land,’ compared with whom Englishmen of the present day are indeed a pigmy race.

In those days suffered the martyrs for the Reformed faith. In those days there were divines in England such as the world never saw before nor since; and congregations flocked to hear them, fitted by natural understanding, if not by education, to imbibe religious truth from the lips of such teachers. In those days Bacon showed himself, the pioneer of nature, the priest of her mysteries. He wrote, and those principles which afterwards were imbibed by a Locke, a Boyle, and a Newton, were admired and pondered over by his contemporaries.

And yet, in the remarkable intellectual era referred to, there was one impending danger—*that of Popery*—

of which the mighty mind of England stood constantly in awe, and against which it would have felt the necessity of being on its guard, even if the conflagrations of Mary, the Spanish Armada, and the Gunpowder Plot had not demonstrated what terrible cause there was for apprehension.

Then, is it not little short of madness for us, of this degenerate generation, to look on with apathy while the members of the Papal community are active and enterprising, and Popery is making such rapid strides, and new Popish chapels are rising on every side of us? That the ascendancy of such a church in Great Britain infers the destruction of the domestic peace of the empire, will be readily acknowledged after a perusal of the following simple tale, such a catastrophe being a necessary consequence of Popish inquisition and *surveillance*, and one on which the Roman Catholic priesthood calculate.

May their trust be overruled by a gracious Providence! or else the dilaceration of the spirit which, with a holy violence against her ingenuous nature, Clotilde kept concealed from her husband and her sister—a dilaceration which might almost remind the reader of the scenic tortures of the ‘Calantha’ of Ford—will be the lot of many an English matron and many an English maiden, in the once happy and inviolable homes of old England.

THE CONFESSOR:

JESUIT TALE OF THE TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

It was on a bright and cloudless morning in the month of June, 18—, that, having disengaged myself from a party of friends, I proceeded alone to visit the cemetery of Père la Chaise—rather prepossessed against a people who could prepare gorgeous palaces for the reception of the dead, and divert the poignancy of grief by decking a charnel-house with flowers.

At the gates of the cemetery I met with a young group, whose happy looks and innocent playfulness had attracted my attention the previous day. These were three girls, the eldest not more than sixteen; two boys, much her juniors; and a female infant in the arms of its nurse.

They were a very attractive group, but of that grade wherein custom has denied to females the privilege of wearing bonnets: but no head-dress could be more becoming than the kerchief which was bound round the polished brow of the elder girl—no decorum more perfect than her manners. They were purchasing one of those crowns formed of everlastings, with which affection loves to decorate the grave of a departed friend. They would gladly have added a bouquet of sweet flowers but for the want of a few sous. I took advantage of their necessity, and secured for myself the thanks of these interesting children.

A few moments more, and I met the same group again; we

proceeded together through the beautiful alleys of Père la Chaise.

Thousands and tens of thousands visit this consecrated spot. They see around them the resting-places of brethren, of parents, of friends. They have met—they have parted—they shall meet in this world no more. But have they parted for eternity? Can we forget the garden of Gethsemane, or the tomb of Emanuel?—the type, the promise, the security that all their splendid monuments and lowly urns will be equally called upon to give back their resuscitated ashes, and in one terrible or gracious moment restore to everlasting life, or chain in everlasting wretchedness, their now decaying dust.

During our progress we met many groups, not one of which displayed the slightest token of levity or irreverence; and few, I should hope, let them enter Père la Chaise with what feelings they may, but must receive some benefit from a short meditation amongst its quiet alleys.

‘Your abode,’ I said to the young female, ‘must be, if I mistake not, at some distance. I saw you yesterday at the barrier of Neuilly.’

‘We go thither on a visit to our grandmother,’ she replied, ‘but reside near the Barriere de l’Enfer. My father is an artist; our greatest treasure is a portrait of Madame (our benefactress) taken by him. We go to strew her tomb with these flowers.’ Saying this she quitted me, and approaching a simple but elegant tomb, bent her knees to the ground, and her head over the marble.

The children, too, joined in the pious task, which, ere it drew to a close, was interrupted by the approach of an elderly priest, whose notice they awaited with silent respect. He stretched his hands over their young heads, and pronounced the promised blessing. I had seldom seen a figure more truly ecclesiastic, or one that impressed me with greater reverence. He again blessed the children and the infant, and walked on. I asked Matilde, the young devotee, if she knew the reverend gentleman personally? She answered in the affirmative, and added, that he visited her father, who was at the present confined at home by an accident.

Matilda and her brother were possessed of considerable beauty, extremely brilliant, and with long flowing hair, like the finest black silk. I should have liked to see the face of the female

infant, but her nurse would not allow me to raise her veil: 'Mademoiselle could not bear,' she said, 'the glance of the meridian sun.'

At this moment a figure, of all others the most interesting in my sight, drew near. I had been separated two years from Mary Trevillion, whom, at a moment's glance, at the extreme point of a long avenue, I instantly recognized. Her quiet manner—her simple, graceful carriage—the sweet and modest elegance of her whole appearance—I could not be mistaken! To no other country than England could she belong—and that English woman was Mary Trevillion.

Quitting my young companions, I was the next instant at her side; and never did pure English sound so refreshing in my ears, as when, in answer to my inquiries for her brother, she said, that they had been one week in Paris, and that this was her second visit to Père la Chaise.

'Those who composed my party yesterday,' she added, 'were strangers—strangers at least to our family history—ignorant of my brother's unhappy position. Her name, which I cannot pronounce without pain, is too sacred to be breathed in the hearing of indifferent persons. But with you there are no reserves. Clotilde is as dear to me as ever, her fate as mysterious. Even here I should be as dead to all around as the tenants of these consecrated graves, except for the hope which everywhere attends me—the almost forlorn hope of one day finding a clue by which to discover my injured sister.'

'Then you entertain the same opinion of her innocence,' I said; 'how few, requited as you have been, would persevere in the defence of one so erring.'

'Our friendship was formed at an early age,' she resumed, while tears flowed from her eyes—'when there are no reserves—when every feeling—every impulse of young hearts are revealed. And never can I believe that Clotilde has erred intentionally.'

'You are indeed a lenient judge, but I cannot understand upon what grounds Miss Trevillion assumes that person to be innocent, whose actions proclaim the reverse. Has not Lady Trevillion forsaken the protection of a husband, and thrown herself upon that of a miscreant? Forgive me, I entreat of you, but 'tis painful to see a judgment, such as yours, so blinded by partiality.'

'We are enjoined not to judge,' replied Miss Trevillion; 'we are told to be merciful, kind, meek, long-suffering, forbearing; and, as Christ forgives, to do likewise. And, above all, to put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.'

'But it may better become me to account for my seeming perverseness than simply to maintain my opinions. I will therefore place in your hands a short history of my friendship for Clotilde.'

'It has been committed to paper, while recollection served, for the purpose of doing what justice I may to one of the most feeling and generous, but the most deluded of human beings. Should my narrative not go the length of her acquittal, it must at least give her the benefit of a doubt, and my object will be attained.'

'Tis a simple narrative of facts, neither adding to, nor extenuating the presumed guilt or innocence of any party.'

'If you can prove,' I said, 'that Lady Trevillion did not voluntarily forsake the protection of an indulgent husband, and afterwards rob him of his child, I shall indeed rejoice.'

'Alas!' replied Mary, with a bitter sigh, 'I can only hope, I dare not affirm. Appearances, I own, are against her; and that last act—if indeed her's,—of robbing us of our child, let the motive be what it might, was one of inexplicable cruelty. To receive Clotilde again—to know that she is guiltless—would gratify the dearest wishes of my heart; but to look upon the infant loveliness of William, to hear his voice, to recognise his joyous laugh, would wipe away all tears.'

And as she spoke, tears, which I was grieved for having caused, ran fast over her melancholy face. She, however, rallied, and adding in less sad accents, 'I have a strange fancy for visiting burial grounds; though 'tis not probable that the grave of a poor outcast should be distinguished by the name of my lost friend.' We continued our walk. 'I have a strange fancy,' she resumed, 'for visiting burial places; although it is not very probable that the grave of a wretched outcast should be distinguished by the name of my lost friend.'

Our walk was prolonged, we had each of us suffered deeply, and it was soothing, though sad, thus to meet among the tombs of those whose sufferings in this world were over. I tried to divert her attention to the present, and observing the venerable

priest, with whose benediction of my juvenile companions I had been so much pleased, I pointed him out to Miss Trevillion.

'The spectacle is, doubtless, an imposing one,' she replied quietly; 'but it is nothing more.'

'Then you believe that so pious a ceremony is only performed for the sake of exhibition—to excite the admiration of lookers-on?'

'I believe that it is done to be seen of men,' returned Mary, 'and that it is not without more substantial remuneration than public approval. The young persons over whom he bent at that tomb are possibly relatives of the deceased, whose *soul*, although absolved, through *his* instrumentality, from all mortal sin before death, is believed to suffer in purgatory, until relieved by a definite number of masses paid for according to the pecuniary circumstances of surviving friends. No prayer is here offered up for the sanctifying of the living; yonder priest intercedes only for the dead; for those whom we believe to have entered into judgment, but whom he teaches are in an intermediate state of trial or of punishment—which gold, and prayers bought by gold, can mitigate or shorten. Oh! Major Melville, how dreadful that a minister of any religion can so deceive.'

'I should hope, in charity, that he is himself deceived.'

'I would try to hope so, too,' she rejoined, 'if the book that he closes to his hearers was not open to himself; if I did not know that while he reads, they only listen—listen to *ex-parte* statements, and to garbled extracts; and that everything tending to encourage free investigation, or to militate against the dark policy of Romish tyranny, is carefully held back. I have studied that sacred book deeply, seriously, and, I trust, impartially. I cannot find one line to authorize the remotest hope for those who die in their sins; and am led to consider the holding out of such hope as the most dreadful, the most dangerous of all deceptions—the most tremendous of all Romish impositions, worse than preaching the merit of penances, or the mediations of saints; much worse than the blasphemous processions which we meet with in the streets.'

'Those processions are losing their effect,' I said, 'they fall off every day; a few old women and college boys alone compose them now.'

'But may not free-will lead to infidelity?' I added. 'Does not this thinking for self produce its evils?'

'Not where the word of God is the teacher, and the Spirit of truth is the guide,' she modestly replied; 'but even among the infidels and Roman Catholics of this country there are many reformed hearts and minds awaking to the truth.'

'Which may be accounted for,' I replied, 'by the increasing mixture of Protestants with Roman Catholics; and by inter-marriages amongst the two persuasions.'

'I would not trust much to the spiritual influence of any Protestant who can marry a Roman Catholic; for religion must be a very secondary principle with such a person. Affliction has rendered me observant, and—'

But what she would have added was left unsaid; for the priest, to whom I had previously directed her attention, turned unexpectedly into our path, creeping heavily along, and leaning upon another ecclesiastic, who, though younger and more erect, looked also as if fatigued, or as if suffering; the latter was much muffled up, and held a handkerchief to his face, probably to ward off the visitations of the breeze. But my trembling, agitated companion knew him at once. 'It is he! It is Father Austin!' And, breaking suddenly from my support, she grasped the arm of the stranger. I followed. The priest thus recognised, shrunk away, apparently anxious to evade detention. In a voice of agony, I heard her inquire for Lady Trevillion—implore the priest to relieve her insupportable suspense—to restore her friend—her lost unhappy sister!

Never till now had I seen the placid face of Mary Trevillion with such an expression of wild impatience—never heard her gentle voice assume a tone so impetuous. But the priest so abruptly and passionately accosted, maintained an impenetrable coolness; calm and collected, he affected not to recognise the agitated speaker.

'You know me, Father Austin,' she continued; 'you cannot have forgotten me, Mary Trevillion, the sister of Clotilde, of Lady Trevillion! Tell me where she is hidden, or hides herself? give me but the slightest clue, and reckon on my everlasting gratitude.'

The livid looks of the priest were almost death-like; his eye quailed beneath her searching gaze. I could see that he would

have persevered in his assumed ignorance if a party of young men had not advanced in our direction.

On perceiving that we were likely to be overheard, he changed his whole behaviour, took the trembling hand of Mary in his, and repeating her name in a tone of deep sympathy, apologised for not having recollected her at once. 'But you are changed,' he said; 'affliction, my young friend, has left its sad traces on your features. Would that I could relieve you! Alas! alas! it is out of my power; do not think because I have no tidings of the fugitive, that no search has been attempted, that I have been indifferent or uninterested in your melancholy labours. This is, however, no place for conversation of such a nature; you seem much exhausted, and I am myself far from calm. Tell me, I pray, when I can see you, and at what house I may be permitted to wait upon you.'

'I cannot loose sight of you,' cried the agitated girl; 'let us seek a more retired path. Major Melville is my relative, my friend! I wish him to be present at our conference.'

'I can only repeat, Miss Trevillion, that I have nothing to tell you, although all my ecclesiastical influence has been used to penetrate the mystery attached to her conduct. I feel, however, that such conduct has been voluntary, that she has been purely incited by scruples of a conscientious nature. You know that I was never ascetic; never rigid over much; that I never used undue severity.

'Oh no!' cried Mary, 'I never knew you! at one time I thought that I did; but my presumption has been punished. I was indeed well read in the bosom of Clotilde, and am consequently aware that her Confessor was as familiar as heaven with her soul; she dared not have taken one step in contradiction to your mandates. She believed you had power to relieve her conscience of every weight, or to load it to madness. I accuse you of abetting her flight, of encouraging fears from which she had not the power of emancipating herself; and I believe that you could forthwith restore her to her husband and redeem her character, if such a course accorded with your interests.'

'Miss Trevillion,' he replied, assuming a look of the most dignified resignation, 'it does not surprise me—the member of an adverse creed—to be unjustly maligned; but it pains me that the aspersion should come from one, who, in happier times, was

wont to honor me with her confidence; a lady, to whom I ascribe that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace, and of all righteousness. What can be that religion, Miss Trevillion, which inclines a mild and kind nature to harsh and unchristian suspicions? But I entreat your pardon. If our heavenly Father hath pleased to chastise, I humbly intercede that the rod may be changed into a balm, that—'

'Oh, cease!' interrupted Mary, in a burst of tears, 'spare me at least your intercessions, your *compassion*. I know that your compassion was denied to her who entreated on her knees for permission to be sincere with the best and most upright of men! that *you* resisted her entreaties; that through you her character is blighted, the happiness of a family destroyed. I demand in her name that she is allowed to exonerate herself; you cannot be ignorant where she is—where Father Cardwell has hid himself. If there be no guilt attached to these mysteries, why should they not be explained? I wrote to you at the time, so did my brother; you replied to our letters!'

Austin looked rather embarrassed, but his reverend companion came to his relief.

'My daughter,' he said, 'you trespass too much on the forbearance of our friend, who, however indulgent, has no right as a servant of our immaculate church, to suffer insult from heretic lips. I, as his superior, forbid him to answer questions, or prolong a discourse in my presence, which it might be my duty to notice elsewhere. Go, child, go in peace; we condemn not those who err in ignorance, and therefore cast a veil over thy fault.'

But Mary still ventured to brave the anathemas of the priesthood.

'No insult can attach to inquiries,' she said, 'which urge the vindication of a once spotless character; and if Father Austin will restore us communication with my much injured sister—'

But Austin hastened to say, 'Should Lady Trevillion have devoted herself of her own will to religious seclusion, the power of my superiors could not compel her return to a world she has renounced.'

'We want not to coerce her will,' persevered the anxious pleader, 'but we desire to clear her reputation, to know where she is; and for what purpose was the abduction of our cherub William.'

I was astonished at the courage and perseverance of my ever gentle companion; and I rightly conjectured, that only a sense of the deepest injury inflicted against those she most loved could have aroused so meek a spirit. But I saw that she could no longer sustain the unequal conflict; for the feeble voice, the tears that trembled in her eyes, proved that she was fast giving way. Interfering, for the first time, I proposed calling upon Father Austin, and hearing all he might have to say upon so painful a subject.

He took out his tablets immediately, and wrote his address, appointing one o'clock next day for my visit; then, bowing low to Miss Trevillion, and requesting I might be punctual, he turned away, and walked in the direction of the gates.

'He will evade me,' she said; 'should we lose sight of him, he is lost to us for ever!'

I offered to see her immediately to her carriage, and to follow him, and trace him to his home.

'Oh, go directly,' she cried, 'my servant is at the gate. Mark well his route; we must not trust to the truth of the address. He will deceive us!'

I obeyed: I hastened in the track of the two ecclesiastics, and kept them in sight. They soon parted; the elder turned into a narrow street, while Father Austin, gathering up his skirts, proceeded at a quick and not very dignified pace; and so rapidly did he move, and so quick were his turnings, that it was only at the hazard of detection I kept him in view. Sometimes he escaped me for a moment, when the skirts of his dress, as he whisked through some short passage, served like some *ignis fatuus* to tempt me onward, until he continued at length to escape me altogether.

In vain did I hurry after the wearer of every clerical cloak, until the closing in of daylight put an end to my watchings, and sent me home to my hotel mortified and disappointed, that I should have no more satisfactory report for Miss Trevillion on the morrow.

I was to call on Sir Charles Trevillion, according to her desire, in the evening. His welcome was marked by the gentlemanly courtesy natural to him; but he manifested little pleasure at my visit. We had never known much of each other. I had not, in happier days, the opportunity of cultivating his friendship, and the reminiscences of this heart-stricken man were not of a soothing description. He might apprehend a renewal of my influence with his sister, and it was natural that a being so cruelly bereaved should

dread to lose the last remaining object on which his heart reposed.

Mary was also reserved and nervous, and made no allusion, in the presence of her brother, to our adventure of *Perè la Chaise*; but, when he left us alone, I reported my failure in the pursuit of Father Austin.

'You will not see him again,' she replied. 'He will fail to keep his appointment: we have lost him for ever!'

'No, Miss Trevillion, not for ever. The old ecclesiastic, who bore him company, is known to some young acquaintance of mine. We have, therefore, a clue to Mr. Austin. Should he disappoint me to-morrow, I do not despair of finding him out.'

This hope, however slight, seemed to re-assure her; and she placed in my hand the promised packet, with which I hastened to my hotel. 'It was a transcript,' she had said, 'of her feelings for the unfortunate Clotilde!'

It was long since I was privileged to take part in those feelings. We had been engaged to each other with the approbation of our mutual relatives. But a severe domestic calamity—in fact, the distress of her only brother, occasioned by the influence of papal oppression, caused our separation—she had no thought but for him. Since that separation we had not met. Time had rendered my disappointment less acute, but the sweet and secret influence she had possessed over me, had never ceased; nor was it at any moment more deeply felt than when I sat down to pursue the precious manuscript she had committed to my charge.

CHAPTER II.

[FROM MARY TREVILLION TO MAJOR MELVILLE,

BEGAN AT TOURS, FEB. 1829.]

EXCEPT the unlooked-for misfortune which caused our separation, there is nothing belonging to that unhappy period remembered with more pain than the obligation which deterred me from giving you a full and candid explanation of my conduct.

Two years have nearly elapsed since necessity compelled the relinquishment of our engagement. The necessity is as binding as ever, but I hope that time may have softened the resentment which you naturally felt on an occasion so trying to us both. I cannot but believe that a communication which delicacy to my brother and his unfortunate wife so long withheld, will be received in the same friendly spirit that I make it. Charles speaks of leaving Europe for some years, and I wish to place in your hands a faithful statement of scenes and circumstances by which the child of two unhappy parents—should William exist—may be enabled hereafter to form some judgment of that verdict which condemns the one, and of those mysterious appearances which (if unexplained) might attach to the other an imputation of severity.

You will, I am sure, pardon a recurrence to my school-room days, as with that period is associated the rise and progress of my friendship for Clotilde de Montmorency and all its unhappy consequences; but I promise to be brief, and shall merely say, that left an orphan when only ten years old, under the guardianship of two brothers several years my seniors, I was placed at a seminary in London. Cut off from every kindred tie at that sensitive period of life, when the young affections seek and require return; thrown upon the capricious kindness of strangers—sometimes caressed, as often repulsed, my thoughts ever turned towards the home of my infancy, and hovered over the graves of my parents.

Until Clotilde made one of Mrs. Murray's establishment, I was

the only orphan. As none understood my feelings, how could any one sympathise in my distress? But, when that charming foreigner became my friend, I was no longer isolated—no longer thrown upon self. The inanity of my life was over. I had acquired a sister. She remembered her departed parents as I remembered mine. The blank caused by their loss was not yet filled up. Her heart, like my own, still sought a more visible resting-place than the Heaven, where in idea we contemplated our dearest relatives—something less solemn and less solitary than their tombs. We found in each other this resting-place. She supplied to me, and I to her, the best and only substitute for all that we had lost—a love as perfectly disinterested, as it was for a while exclusive.

Gifted with beauty, feeling, and genius, with a heart full of the most generous sentiments—capable of attaining excellence in all she undertook, and energetic in her undertakings, no wonder if she were an object of emulation amongst a little circle of competitors; or of admiration and love to such a one as myself, who might be said, like the solitary chrysalis, to exist, but to have no consciousness of existence until warmed into feeling by the sunshine of her presence.

The father of my friend, an Irishman and a soldier, had fought against Napoleon, and was taken prisoner; but his hours of incarceration were not without their solace. A Frenchman of good family, equally obnoxious to the Emperor, shared in his captivity; and was visited by an only daughter. De Montmorency married her. Clotilde, born in a prison, breathed, during the first four years of infancy, no freer air. Death, in that short period, deprived her both of father and grandfather, when Madame de Montmorency removed to a convent in Paris, and devoted her brief and exemplary life to the education of her only child. At thirteen the latter became an orphan, but the superior of the convent retained and treated her with much kindness, until a great uncle—General de Montmorency—sought out and claimed his nephew's child, whom, withdrawing from conventual seclusion, he brought with him from England, and placed under the care of Mrs. Murray.

Never can I forget the first impression made upon us all by this lovely girl. Not that she was critically beautiful; it was expression that rendered her features so attractive; and whether grave or gay, serious or full of vivacity, the fascination never ceased.

It was when I attained my eighteenth birthday, that accounts

reached London of the death of my eldest brother at Florence; and again was the tender sympathy of Clotilde drawn forth. Before the end of the year, my brother Charles arrived from India, and a letter from Falmouth promised that he should see me in London. But the pleasure of our anticipated meeting was not without its fears; for although he would have forfeited his passage to India, rather than have quitted England without a certainty that I was eligibly placed at school, there was not that natural indulgence for a young sister which rendered William's visits always a holyday.

Charles never seemed to forget that he was my senior. His conversation was always made up of advice; it held me in tutelage. Yet his feelings were strong: his heart was kind, and capable of the most devoted love. But he was too much of a disciplinarian to encourage confidence in those younger than himself. His letter from Falmouth was rather that of a guardian than a brother; and its conclusion, 'trusting to find me improved,' were words that renewed an apprehensiveness which kept me awake for the night.

Clotilde shared my thoughts, although she could not partake of my fears; and, as a military character, associated the brother of her friend with everything noble, generous, and kind.

But when he did arrive, all my anxieties were put to flight; when, clasping me in his arms, he wiped the tears from my eyes, and turned to the window to conceal his own. Suffice it to say that my pleasure far surpassed my hopes, and that although, as a guardian, he thought it right to put some questions relative to improvement, they were preferred without any of the austerity that I had dreaded.

In short, he seemed to forget that I was twelve years his junior; and had he not looked so superior to every one else, I should have looked upon him in every way as my equal.

Soon as he was gone I flew to my friend, and shed those tears upon her bosom which now fell without restraint. For, although tears of joy, they did not flow quite so freely in the presence of Charles. She participated in my happiness, and wept and smiled by turns; while believing that a brother, who called forth so much emotion, must be the most deserving of them.

Charles visited me occasionally, but it never occurred to

him, as it had done to William, that I should like some indulgence, or wish even for the simple recreation of a walk. At length Mrs. Richardson, the wife of an East Indian director, called at Mrs. Murray's. It was my first introduction to this lady; she seemed good-tempered and obliging. Clotilde was in the room; I ventured to introduce her as my friend. Mrs. Richardson asked me if I had seen the British Gallery lately. I replied in the negative, when she invited me to accompany her there on the following day, and included my friend in the invitation.

Clotilde was delighted.

Mrs. Richardson kept her appointment.

My young friend had dressed with unusual care. No one could look more lovely; her eyes sparkled with animation; her whole countenance was radiant with delight. I longed for the moment of her introduction to Charles, who joined us at Somerset House. And, guarded as were his manners, they betrayed the admiration he felt.

Expecting to meet an insignificant school-girl like myself, he beheld in Clotilde the most attractive and intelligent of women; one who expressed herself with perfect ease, yet with the most winning modesty, and who commanded attention without even seeming to seek it. I observed that he lost not a word; and when she ceased to speak, he renewed the subject, in order to hear her again. They conversed principally in French, for her English was rather defective; nor was Charles her only auditor. Crowds followed in the train of the fascinating foreigner. When she stopped before a picture, they stopped also; when she moved, they moved after her. Neither abashed nor elated by such marked attention, a love of painting engrossed her wholly; and the wish to please—to be amiable—arising from the sweetness of her nature, were feelings totally distinct from any inclination to be admired.

A perfect historian—an exact chronicler—an enthusiastic lover of the fine arts—she had seen and made acquaintance with the rich treasures of the Louvre, when the Louvre was a receptacle for collected spoils. And to Charles, whose knowledge of artists and their works was chiefly derived from reading, her's seemed no less marvellous than unerring.

Mrs. Richardson detained us for dinner, and Clotilde made the attraction of the day. Charles, despite himself, threw off his

reserve, and was the most animated of the party. My friend thought him, as she said to me, on our return home, *charmant, spirituel*; and he felt that in her was realized his *beau idéal* of female perfection. Even I acquired some importance in his eyes from possessing such a friend; and was requested to take her for my model—to imitate her manners. But I knew that neither man nor woman ever improved themselves by imitation: such manners were not be imitated, and I avoided to make myself ridiculous.

Mrs. Richardson, but lately an inhabitant of London, had not as yet secured a very general acquaintance. She was, however, the proprietress of a fine house, the mistress of a variety of equipages, with the disposition to share her possessions. Clotilde and myself soon became favorites, and often encroached upon the indulgence of Mrs. Murray; but Charles was ever at hand to intercede in our behalf, and to solicit her patience. The summer vacation drew on. Mrs. Richardson established herself at Brighton, and we received an invitation to her house. My brother volunteered his services as an escort, and her hospitality was accepted with delight.

Six weeks of pleasurable idleness soon passed away; during which time I should scarcely have recognized Charles, who, transformed from a grave and rather strict disciplinarian into a gay and gallant cavalier, promoted our enjoyments, and became young again in the service of youth.

Instead of scrutinizing with a critic's eye, or measuring with too much exactness the merits or demerits of his fellow-creatures, every object and every scene were endued with the spirit of universal love, and with the power of dispensing happiness. Amusements of the simplest nature sufficed for his enjoyment. He no longer thought it dignified to restrain his sensibilities, or to be less cheerful than his companions: in short, he was incited by a wish to please; he had the gratification of another to consult.

Superior in understanding to most men, richer in his intellectual endowments, all that he required to render him beloved was, that those excellent qualities might appear; that the ice in which they were encrusted and preserved might be suffered to thaw, and a genial warmth to expand them.

It was the bright sunshine of Clotilde's presence which effected this change. It was owing to her benign influence

that his prejudices gave way, and that the fine qualities of his mind became all at once apparent.

It may be supposed that the cause, no less than the effect, was the subject of rejoicing with me; but such was not the case. Either with a presentiment of future events, inherited from my highland mother, or with an insight into character far beyond my years, I felt that Charles and Clotilde were not formed to constitute the happiness of each other. And yet their tastes, their sentiments, their predilections on every subject were the same—except that sacred subject upon which husband and wife should have the one heart and the one belief.

Carried away by his feelings, Charles paused not to think upon this vital point; and without taking it into consideration he won her affections, and engaged her for his own.

I knew that it was impossible to cherish a deeper veneration for the purest of all creeds, and its most enlightened expositors, than did this amiable and grateful French girl for the specious religion which she professed, or for those who, while instructing, blinded her to its faults. None of its formalities would be given up—none of its impositions resisted; upon the most interesting of all topics she must have her reserves. And would not Charles have his jealousies? He, who could not endure the slightest species of disguise—who, with the affections, and the hand, would claim the whole heart of his wife—how was he to endure being supplanted by her confessor? The Sabbath, that blessed day of family repose and family reunion, would it not separate them in person as in mind? Alas! I had felt this already. For six days in the week Clotilde and myself had (so to speak) but the one heart between us—upon the Sabbath we were disunited. She was present, in conformity with Mr. Murray's rules, at school-room prayers on week days, and read, and got off book, some portion of the Scriptures. But on the Sundays she went in charge of a Roman Catholic lady—her only acquaintance in London—to attend mass in her own place of worship; and while we Protestants listened to the biblical expositions of our governess, she retired and studied her own ritual. On such occasions I felt that we were alienated—that I was excluded from sharing in the most sacred of her contemplations.

Mrs. Murray had, at first, objected to receive this fascinating Roman Catholic. But General de Montmorency's distress at her refusal, and his anxiety to place Clotilde under the care of a person of whom he had some previous knowledge, overruled her. She, however, stipulated that his niece should attend morning and evening prayer, and never converse on the subject of religion except with herself.

In part these conditions were complied with—Clotilde did attend prayers; but having received instruction from her priest, she abstracted her attention, and heard nothing. Also, in obedience to the same orders, she forfeited her promise, and made some attempts for my conversion. But guarded against all sophistries in religion by the sound instruction of my conscientious governess, and puzzled by the incomprehensible doctrines that were broached by my friend, almost afraid to trust myself with eloquence, which, though false was dazzling, I could only answer by a few simple truths, and request that she might respect the conditions upon which our intercourse was permitted. She did so; for, when not influenced against the dictates of her own pure conscience, no one could be more honorable, more conscientious; and from that hour we purposely avoided all reference to sacred subjects.

Poor Clotilde! although strictly religious, her religion was made up of feeling. She had been instructed in love; and the veneration with which she spoke of her *prêtre*, of her sainted mother, of the superior of her convent, amounted almost to idolatry;—gratitude to her teachers attached a heart so affectionate to the creeds that they taught; and until she could forget these early friends, which with her was impossible, their lessons were indelible. Oh! why is not sacred instruction always conveyed in such a spirit? Why are not such precious lessons impressed upon the plastic mind of youth with such an undying influence?

Charles, on the contrary, was entirely devoid of enthusiasm, and rested his belief on truth alone. He had been taught, he had examined, and was convinced, both from education and reason, that his was the religion of that church of which our Redeemer was the founder, and his disciples the builders.

Firmly a Protestant, his practice was upright as his creed was pure; and fully trusting to the efficacy of adhering to

that creed—satisfied that it was from the beginning, and must endure unto the end; that none other could prevail—he sought not to elevate, by a comparison with one less primitive, the original standard under which he was enlisted himself. He, therefore, knew too little of Romanism to be upon his guard against its wiles, against the gloss of its deceptions, or the snares that might be set in his path.

While making use of terms apparently harsh, I am far from alluding to Clotilde. • I speak only of the religion itself—of the fallacies by which it is supported; not of the devout and pious believers who are its victims and its slaves.

Charles had listened to the most exquisite moral reflections from the most beautiful lips. He had walked with Clotilde upon the moon-lit cliffs of Brighton, when not a breath of air ruffled the broad expanse of waters, nor a cloud obscured the starry sky. He had seen her place one fair hand upon her bosom, while with the other raised to heaven, she described each movement of the celestial bodies; leading, as she spoke, the thoughts of all who heard her from the earth on which they trod, to the glories to which she pointed; expatiating on the happiness of those, who, devoting their lives in this vain world to the studies which fit them for another, enjoy even here—'*soul avec Dieu*'—the blessedness of spiritual communion.

Could he apprehend, while thus excited by love and admiration, that a heart from which emanated sentiments so sublime, was a heart of which he read not the whole? And, when impatient to secure such a treasure, he confessed that the happiness of his future life rested upon her preference, she candidly avowed her own feelings in his favor, and rendered him the most grateful of men. They talked over the interesting subject of religion, and entered into a mutual agreement that each should be to the other conscience free, that it should never interfere with their domestic peace. We removed to Brighton, where, in less than a month, the interesting French girl took upon herself the sacred duties of a British matron. Charles carried his bride to the continent. They proceeded first to Paris, where Clotilde had set her heart upon my accompanying them; but Charles did not mean to be unkind—he was only uncomplying; and in such a case, it was natural that a third person should be considered in the way.

Meanwhile letters from my new sister were a source of the highest gratification. Her descriptions were living images, bringing all the scenes in which she was herself engaged, like animated pictures, before the eyes of others,—but alas ! the gratification was not without alloy ; and, if I wanted proof that her early impressions were never to be effaced, that proof was furnished in her letters. She explained in all (after her arrival at Paris) that, in the convent, nothing had undergone a change ; that, added to the pleasure of finding *Madame la Mère* exactly as she had left her, everything in the dear old apartments retained their former places. ‘I would not,’ she added, ‘replace the faded footstool for worlds, upon which I sat at the feet of my instructress ! I have placed this little footstool in its former position—and, in the same humble posture, have repeated some of her invaluable exercises. I have proved to her that they are not forgotten. I have also, dearest sister, enjoyed the supreme benefit of renewed communion with the *Perè Montcalm* ; have had the heavenly consolation of recounting my sins to that holy man in the same sacred confessional, where, by his blessed intercession, they have been so frequently absolved ; and I look forward to performing the same christian rite before that pious saint ere our return to England. Your brother is now impatient to prosecute his tour, and we consequently shall, to-morrow, leave this scene of renewed associations and precious recollections.’

These ‘renewed associations’ and ‘precious recollections,’—this ‘pious saint and his confessional,’ I doubted not, might account for my brother’s desire to quit Paris, and his subsequent change of plans ; nor was I sorry when Clotilde’s visits to the convent were brought to a close. At Lyons, Charles met with an old military friend, who engaged him to pass the Christmas at Tours, and my disappointment was again extreme. But time went on : ere the end of April, I saw the arrival announced of Sir Charles and Lady Trevillion ; a hastily written letter from the latter confirmed the joyful news, rendered more gratifying by her assurances that we should part no more ; as also, by a postscript in my brother’s hand, desiring that I should prepare for an immediate removal to Cornwall.

CHAPTER III.

FEMALE friendship, it is said, seldom survives marriage. But, however true this adage in a general sense, Clotilde, at least, formed one amiable exception. Our reunion after her return was like the reunion of one heart on which separation had inflicted a deep but casual wound, but which again uniting, was cemented more firmly than ever by the strong ligaments of love.

Pendyffryn, the dear old home of my infancy, though situated on a retired part of the Cornish coast, being very richly wooded, and close to the beach, wears a cheerful aspect at all seasons of the year. When we arrived there, the first week in May, every production of nature teemed with the promise of abundance. No climate could be more delicious, no fields more fragrant. The shrubs, the flowers, all kinds of vegetation were much more forward than in the neighbourhood of London. A glowing heat was tempered by a fresh sea breeze, and the sparkling radiance of the glistening wave was most gratefully relieved by the beauteous green of the vegetable world.

The house itself—a venerable pile erected in the reign of Elizabeth, commanding a fine view of the extensive park, the curving shore, and of some romantic cliffs, which, jutting far out into the water, present a bold feature in the landscape—is approached through a magnificent avenue of elms; and though its interior was, at the time when Clotilde first saw it, neither very spacious nor very light, that style of architecture which still ornaments the west of England, and of which so many venerable specimens are extant there, endued the whole with an air of ancient respectability, that, even in the eyes of a foreigner, compensated for modern improvement. The entrance

hall, especially, running the whole depth of the building, wainscoted with oak, and hung with various trophies, both of war and of the chase, called forth her admiration. Charmed with the first view of her new territory, its happy mistress rested not 'till she ran over the whole'; nor were Charles and myself more eager to recognise old friends than was Clotilde to make new acquaintance. Like children appropriating some novel toy, we rivalled each other in our expressions of delight. While my brother, at once the possessor of a fine ancestral residence and of a lovely wife, free from every care, and surrounded by blessings, expressed himself the happiest of men.

But it is not permitted that butter and honey should always fill the cup of mortals. Man—a free agent—mixes for himself, and often choosing the evil while he rejects the good, many a bitter drop is mingled with his portion.

Our little circle at Pendyffryn was not exempted from what is common to all; nor was our portion (blessed though it seemed) without its drop of bitterness. Having lived abroad before his marriage, and gone to France immediately afterwards, Charles was unfamiliar with the Sabbath homes of England: But returning to the domestic scenes of boyhood, they were brought back to his mind with a keen and vivid recollection of those pious observances which had cemented the former relations of life—all that remained of his parents, and which could no more be separated from their memories than the inheritance to which he was heir. And English feelings—feelings so perfectly indigenous, that, however scorched, between the tropics, or frozen at the pole, they scarcely fail to bud afresh when restored to the healthful atmosphere of home—resumed their former influence, and induced a wish to revive in his own newly created circle those early practices, which, having recently attended to in the nursery, he had not totally forgotten in the camp.

'I remember as if it were but yesterday,' he said, when speaking on this subject to Clotilde and myself, 'how beautifully regular was every arrangement of my mother's. How dignified, yet how kind were her manners! How much method there was in her household, how much propriety everywhere; and what a respectable community surrounded my father!

We can do no better than follow an example which led to such happy results. My parents were virtuously attached to their home. There was a pure moral patriotism blended with religious feeling in all that they did. It is certainly a high, but I hope not a very peculiar privilege, in England, to feel no less the heir of an uncontaminated ancestry than of a splendid estate. How doubly responsible, therefore, is the individual whose parents have left him a name !'

Clotilde, delighted with any subject which had the power of awakening enthusiasm in her husband, encouraged him to talk of his parents. She especially loved to hear of his mother, and requested to be told of her favorite pursuits, to be made acquainted with her favorite haunts, her favorite poor. Amongst these last there had been no favoritism, and she promised to follow so just a precedent in all things. Alas ! there was one material point in which she could not follow that unerring precedent ; the blending of religious consolations and religious example with deeds of charity : and if the unfailing attendance of a former Lady Trevillion at her parish church, induced the wives and daughters of a numerous peasantry to show the same reverence to the same sacred structure, it was to be lamented that the steps of her successor should lead a different way.

I had always apprehended that the intervention of the Sabbath—especially when we should be stationary at home—would prove to all of us a painful recurrence ; nor were such apprehensions without their fulfilment. There being few Roman Catholic inhabitants in that part of the country, and no Roman Catholic place of worship within many hours' drive, Clotilde, poor soul ! when every other member of the family walked to the house of God as friends, remained at home a solitary alien ; and then it was that Charles tasted that bitter drop already hinted at—then it was that the first shadows appeared on our horizon of domestic peace.

The church was situated within Pendyffryn Park ; and as he and I proceeded thither on foot the first Sunday after our arrival at home, we saw that every path leading to the same point was thronged with country people in their best attire ; while the principal farmers waited with their families in the church-yard, eager to congratulate the bridegroom, and to have a first peep of the bride.

By some I was taken for Lady Trevillion, and respectful salutations greeted my approach; but, by others, the little girl lost sight of nine years' before, was soon brought to mind; and inquiries for the health of 'my lady,' with hopes that illness did not keep her at home, placed Charles in an awkward predicament. He could only say, that he hoped they should see her ere long; and, in consequence, gave an entertainment to his tenantry before the end of that week, when their new lady was introduced to them with every advantage of hospitality and kindness.

The beauty and affable manners of Clotilde were calculated to render her popular; but a whisper had gone round, and curiosity, if not distrust, was mingled with the admiration she received. Formed, however, to do away with prejudice, and to win every heart, a feeling so unworthy of her merits could not long predominate; and those who most loved and respected her predecessor, were the first to make a transfer of respect and affection to herself. Generosity is always a popular virtue; and she, who was generous in the extreme, possessed the rare tact of conferring a favor without seeming to bestow a benevolence. It was impossible for the poorest creature relieved by her charity, not to think more highly of the donor than of her gifts; and long deprived of the kindly influence attached to female protection, the dependents and tenantry of Pendyffryn soon learned to appreciate its value, and to forget that their young benefactress fell short, in any respect, of her they had lost.

To see the wife so beloved thus making her own way, thus respected and esteemed, was a source of the highest gratification to her husband; and I am sure that their only drawback—the difference of religious opinions—was felt by him, more for her sake than his own. A Romish church, with all those pomps and ceremonies which render its services so imposing, was now, for the first time, missed by Clotilde; and we observed her to be affected by those occasional fits of chagrin to which all French women, be they ever so lively, are subject at times. Accustomed to excitement in the performance of her devotions, the solitary retirement of closet-prayer was by no means sufficiently elevating for her habits; and Charles, apprehensive (from seeing her sometimes doped)

that she might conceive herself neglected, gave up his afternoon attendance at church to walk out with and amuse her; for the same reason I sometimes declined Doctor Bentley's request to remain between the services, and encourage, by my assistance, the progress of the Sunday schools.

This excellent minister, whose moral and religious example had been a blessing in the parish for above twenty years, was in the habit, when afternoon service was over, of passing the evenings with our family; for my grandmother was not latterly in that state of health which allowed her of attending the church; and on our return, Charles sought, for many reasons to reëstablish a practice so beneficial. But Doctor Bentley, not able to reconcile his mind to a Popish wife for his friend, kept ceremoniously aloof; but at length charity prevailed, and he yielded to our wishes. Perhaps he might hope that Clotilde, being removed from bigoted influence, and not for the present under *surveillance* of a spiritual director, might venture to listen, while, according to old custom on the Sabbath evenings, he gave us an exposition of the lessons for the day; and this in a manner so simple, clear, and truthful, as was suited to the comprehension of every servant in the house; and it was a subject of sincere gratification to us all that Lady Trevillion did not turn away from such expositions.

Mild, unpretending, but dignified, our venerable pastor united the profound learning of a scholar with the unfailing attributes of a gentleman; and his conversation, instructive upon every occasion, took, when opportunity offered, a tone so highly spiritual, that it was impossible to hear him without being impressed—while, like one set apart to train celestial plants for the vineyard of peace, he led others to search; and the results of his labour were conviction, truth, the christian graces of charity, with faith and hope.

She now heard of the charities and goodness of her husband's mother, and loved to speak of her with Doctor Bentley, to consult him as to acts of benevolent usefulness amongst the poor; to ask his advice and assistance.

Rejoicing in her good intentions, in her approbation of our excellent pastor; believing it impossible that she could associate in works of mercy with one whose practice so much adorned

his precepts, yet not benefit by the light that ever emanated from his conversation—I augured the happiest results, and communicated my hopes to Charles, who, even more sanguine than myself, felt as if the only cloud was soon to pass away, which dulled the brightness of his domestic joys.

Amongst other acts of beneficence, Clotilda established near the house, and under her own immediate inspection, a school for the female children of the poor labourers and smaller tenants of Pendyffryn. These children were clothed at her expense; a dinner provided; and if a little difficulty attended the undertaking, that difficulty enhanced the value of success.

‘I will teach them what I can,’ said the benevolent foundress. ‘They seem deplorably ignorant, but with their religious amelioration I have nothing to do. That privilege, my dear Marie, must belong to yourself.’

She adhered to her promise—we divided the labours of tuition between us, and all seemed to prosper. If Lady Trevillion’s power had equalled her will, poverty or care would have been unknown; for, although married to a man nearly fifteen years her senior, she never felt the slightest restraint, but enjoyed, in their fullest extent, the delights of liberty and power. But such happiness was too perfect; we forgot the cup of bitterness. Alas! it was tasted too soon.

CHAPTER IV.

WITHIN a mile of the house, immediately beyond the park paling, and defended from the west wind by a rocky promontory already noticed, there are scattered a few small houses, inhabited chiefly by fishermen. The site of this little hamlet is romantic, the air salubrious, and beneath the shelter of the projecting rocks, are some recluse commodious spots whence the waves never entirely recede, and where bathing may be enjoyed at any hour, quite independent of their influx.

But fashion has not found out, or set a value on the retiring beauties of this healthful retreat, and few places in this age of improvement owe so little to artificial aid. Consequently, the village of Pendyffryn has hitherto escaped the patronage of pleasure hunters, the influx of visitors. Its inhabitants are poor, their houses mean, and destitute of comforts. Even the postmaster's domicile presents a forbidding aspect; but he keeps a shop of all sorts, and advertises 'two rooms to let.' Which two rooms, albeit the only lodgings in the place, are very seldom tenanted.

But about the first week in July—three months after our arrival—two strangers came to the village; and, taking up their quarters with the postmaster, created no trifling sensation. They had crossed the country from Ilfracombe, were clergymen, and one, professing himself to be an invalid in search of pure sea air and perfect quiet, engaged the 'two rooms' for a month, his companion almost immediately proceeding elsewhere. A report soon found its way to Clotilde, purporting that the stranger was a Roman Catholic priest; and she eagerly implored Charles to ascertain its truth; confessing, with tears in her eyes, that being debarred religious exercises was the

only drawback to her happiness; and that, should the person in question prove to be a minister of the church, she would feel that his arrival in the neighbourhood was an especial favour from Heaven to herself.

The truth was ascertained without delay; for the postmaster's inmate, an Irish Roman Catholic priest, as reported, made no secret of his profession; and the pious heart of Clotilde was filled with gratitude. She expressed her satisfaction in the warmest terms, and entreated her husband to call on their valuable acquisition, and to request the favor of his company at the Park.

'Such a domicile as the post-office,' she added, 'must be wretchedness itself. Assure him, dear Charles, that he will be perfectly quiet here, and that every thing shall be done to render him comfortable.'

But Charles, not being quite so zealous on the subject, nor quite so sure that their new neighbor must prove a valuable acquisition, rather checked the exuberance of her hospitality, by suggesting that it might be as wise only to receive him in his professional capacity at first, and not rush into an intimacy, until they had some opportunity of knowing with whom.

'We are so small a society,' he continued, 'so perfectly united and confidential. Doctor Bentley is so much one of ourselves, that I own myself fearful of additions. You can write to-morrow or next day, requesting to see this person at some given hour. Meanwhile, I shall speak to Doughty, the postmaster, and learn something more of his inmate.'

Clotilde, but little used to have a request denied, looked, as she felt, disappointed; but urged the point no further, and wrote her note, desiring to see the Roman Catholic clergyman at his convenience.

Such a desire, coming from such a quarter, was sure to be complied with. He named twelve o'clock the following day; and, punctual to the hour, Mr. Mac Cardwell was announced.

Charles had ordered his horses, and rode out; but Clotilde, desiring that I should remain, and assist in receiving her visitor, awaited him in the library.

Entering the room with modest mien, head bent down, grave aspect, and languid step, he silently took possession of the chair

assigned him, for a prolonged fit of coughing interfered with his articulation. But as soon as the cough subsided, he reverted to his health, which, being injured by severe parochial duty in Ireland, rendered change of air and relaxation in a warmer climate necessary to his recovery. Such, at least, was the history he made out for himself; but never was personal appearance more at variance with a statement of the kind. I would that I could describe him as he impressed me upon this our first interview, but it would require the pencil of an Hogarth to do the portrait justice. Suffice it to say, that vulgar effrontery was inadequately veiled, or rather, that it was rendered more conspicuous by affected modesty; that, while aiming at the semblance of long suffering and sanctity, a totally different effect was produced—an effect almost amounting to the ludicrous. His athletic person and expansive chest were no more in character with the frequent cough and oppressive breathing of which he complained, than was his youth—for he could scarcely have numbered thirty years—his undignified manner and florid color, with the age, self-denial, and venerable appearance which one attaches to the sacred calling of a father-Confessor. In short, the whole was equivocal, the manner false: it gave the idea of a jester acting the Pharisee, or a boon-companion adopting the character of a devotee. His eyes, as if he were afraid to trust them with performing their allotted part, were cautiously bent to the ground; yet I once or twice caught them fixed on us with what appeared vulgar curiosity, but which I afterwards knew to be inquisitorial examination.

After some attempts at general conversation, Clotilde reverted to the subject nearest her heart; lamenting the loss she felt of religious consolations, and her anxiety to seize upon the opportunity thus providentially presented. But he avoided to enlarge on the topic, perhaps owing to the restraint imposed by my presence, and, changing it for another, soon took his leave, fixing an earlier hour on the following day for the performance of a rite so anxiously desired.

Previous to her residence in London, Clotilde had had no other male instructor or Confessor than the Père Montcalm. That 'beloved prêtre', as she called him, had afterwards placed her under the religious guidance of a reverend brother in London, especially chosen by himself; and I had always under-

stood that, in accordance with the advice of this early friend (strengthened by the dying wishes of her mother), she abstained from the benefits of the Confessional, except such benefit could be enjoyed with the sanction, and under the direction, of the same revered prêtre, to whose authority, as well as to the wishes of her mother, she had, until now, been scrupulously obedient. But, in her present state of health, there was no chance of a visit to London, and, as the time of her confinement drew near, fears of death, and of dying unabsolved, weighed heavily upon her mind. She wrote to the Père Montcalm; she unburdened her conscience to him. But auricular confession was needful for her soul's repose; she could not resist the opportunity now offered of removing that weight, of being cleansed from all sin—forgiven—justified.

Next day Mac Cardwell was punctual to the hour, and on this occasion my sister received him alone. They retired to her *boudoir*; and there she performed that secret ceremonial of the Romish church, which I hoped would have satisfied her conscience, and absolved us from further intercourse with the Confessor, at least for some time.

But who may hope—when domination is the object—any remission from its advances? Once admitted as conscience-keeper to Lady Trevillion, Mac Cardwell was not slow in assuming the authority with which his church invests her ministers. And, though concealing such authority under the semblance of respect and fatherly consideration, under zeal for her spiritual welfare, the love of power and of encroachment were visible through all; while she, imperceptibly to herself, but apparently to me, yielded her opinions to his, and was drawn on to an intercourse, which, if her own judgment had been allowed its free exercise, she would rather have avoided than encouraged. Though not invited to the house, or noticed by its master—for Clotilde did not, for the present, urge that point with her husband—the Confessor stood upon no ceremony in making use of the grounds, merely assigning as a reason for haunting our walks, that the bleakness of the shore disagreed with his lungs, and that in the sheltered enclosures of Pendyffryn Park, he could enjoy the benefit of milder air without running the hazard of cold. A milder climate was not, however, the real object of the assumed invalid. Had it been so, there were

remote parts in the extensive park much more sheltered than those near the house, where he might have wandered at pleasure, without obtruding upon our privacy, or taking so great a liberty with a person as yet so little known to him as Sir Charles; who, not of a disposition to tolerate vulgar impertinence, or submit to the violation of our privacy, requested him to infer, by *our* reserve, that his intrusion was a trespass.

Clotilde, disposed to obedience, made some courageous efforts; but daily the same trespass was committed, daily the same meetings took place; for habitual respect for the ministers of her religion restricted her efforts to such silent hints as were not understood, or else designedly unnoticed; while my broader rebuffs were treated with perfect indifference. He continued as usual to cross our path, and, though we passed him with no more than a common-place salutation; though we sometimes refrained from necessary exercise, still, like the centre of a vortex, which—when once swept into its current, it is impossible to shun, we seemed impelled towards his influence, despite every effort to escape it.

The months of August and September passed away. Clotilde approached to the most interesting event of her life. Alas! we knew not then how much the dangers of that coming event were exaggerated—how much her fears were excited—how all was made subject to the influence of a selfish alarmist, who, working on her nerves, enforced the necessity of religious, or rather of fanatical rites, making her condition an excuse for superstitious performances, which, while they robbed her of her strength, considerably added to the coffers of the Confessor.

That event, so anxiously anticipated, at length took place, and the young mother was blessed in the birth of a son. Her deep, deep joy, when first she heard his cry, her expressions of gratitude, I never can forget; her fervent prayers!—they sprung from a heart devoted to her God, her husband, and to maternal love. O, my Clotilde! however you may have been deceived, coerced, or led by mistaken zeal beyond the bounds of female caution; that heart, and those feelings, if not exempt from human error, are assuredly free from intentional guilt. However you may suffer, it is for the evil deeds of others, not for any evil perpetrated designedly by yourself!

Sir Charles was anxious that his son should be publicly and

immediately baptised; therefore, as soon as the collective wisdom of the nursery decreed that it was safe for so precious an infant to brave the open air, that ceremony was performed in the parish church.

On the same day, his mother went through the ordinances of her religion, under the auspices of the Roman Catholic priest; and, when I saw her after they were over, there was so calm, so beatified an expression on her countenance—evidently the result of religious security and peace—that tears rushed to my eyes as I reflected how fatal might be that security, how false that peace. How could I look, without pity, on a creature so piously inclined, and of so excellent a judgment, yielding that judgment to one so infinitely her inferior in understanding, and resting her eternal hopes upon the erring faith of a superstitious bigot! It was the blind leading the blind; the deluded led by the deluder; the humble worshipper by the self-righteous Pharisee—by one, who, if he were not grossly ignorant, must most wilfully deceive—who, though the machine by which he worked was kept out of sight, exhibited a too visible product. Clotilde, a slave in the hands of a tyrant, was daily and hourly prostrating her mind on the altar of intolerance, withdrawing her confidence from the husband of her love, and giving it to the avaricious zealot who ruled her spirit.

I saw all this. Doctor Bentley saw it also; but what could we do? Convinced that domestic peace and social obligation weigh not a feather in the political scales by which heartless expediency doles out her measures, and aims at the subjugation of her victims—convinced also, that there was no hope of escaping the evil except by flying the contagion—we mutually agreed, that, as soon as the health of Clotilde should be reëstablished, and that no risk from a journey could be apprehended for the child, the Doctor should state sincerely what he thought to my brother.

CHAPTER V.

I HAD imagined that the clergy of the Romish persuasion, with the advantages of foreign travel and a learned education, must be in the general accomplished, or at least gentlemanly companions. I was not then aware how low and derogatory are, in many cases, the early habits of that priesthood, or how difficult, even with some advantages of education, it is to eradicate such habits, especially with men who never lose sight of their old associations, and who make their way, and secure their popularity, as much by a familiar manner in private society, as by their observances of superstitious rights, and the enforcing of slavish obedience in all matters connected with religion.

Mr. Mac Cardwell could speak French so as to make himself understood, though not like a person who had been in the habit of conversing with Frenchmen. He also knew something of music, and could sing; but these made the sum total of his accomplishments. He had no learning, exclusive of his theological dogmata; no liberality of mind. The word, indeed, was often on his lips, but the feeling and the practice were to him unknown. There was discernible in every sentiment an inherent low propensity to be jealous of his superiors. His overbearing love of contradiction, even in his most servile attempts at conciliation, was ever breaking forth, and betraying how little he had been accustomed to the restraints of society. Charles, at the first glance, condemned him as unfit to take a place in our domestic circle; and though the politeness of my brother forbade any indication of repulsiveness, that politeness went no farther than a very brief recognition when they accidentally met, until the day when little William was baptised. That day, for the first time, Mac Cardwell was invited to dinner. Charles made this effort in

compliment to his wife ; who, however, did not yet join us at table. Doctor Bentley and our family physician made up the party ; and I never saw the Confessor so much upon his guard. It was the first step, and he trod it with caution ; but it was a step never retraced. It was attaining the *entrée*, and opening the door. Alas ! where was the power that might close it in future.*

Shortly after the marriage of my brother, and very soon after our return to Cornwall, when Clotilde's religion was known to be Roman Catholic, a few poor families professing the same creed, mostly the wives and children of fishermen, laid claim to her protection, and were, of course, benefited by her bounty. The mothers of a few little girls petitioned that their daughters might be admitted to our private school ; and though admittance was restricted to the families of poor labourers employed on the estate, an exception was made in their favor. We found them in a state of the utmost neglect, uncouth, refractory, idle ; but when classed with the better informed of their own ages, comfortably clad, and sufficiently fed, these poor things soon evidenced, like their precursors, the harmonising effects of protection, of regular and pious instruction, of order, of subordination. They learned the same scripture lessons, and answered the simple questions adapted to their years ; and, in common with their Protestant companions, were soon equally emulous of improvement ; their grateful parents never meeting us without blessing the humanity and tenderness which had wrought such a change in their offspring, whom they represented as becoming dutiful, peaceable, and industrious. But the Confessor had not long been a resident in our neighbourhood, when his influence was directed to the disturbance of that equanimity which heretofore regulated our proceedings, and was so productive of christian charity amongst our little flock. He began by visiting these Romish children in their own homes, as duty prompted ; but was duty the actuating motive with Father Mac Cardwell ? was it not desire of appropriation, avarice ? He dared not deprive them of the loaves and fishes which they shared with their schoolfellows, but he could interfere with their instruction, and presently interfered in the school itself ; thereby setting aside our simple system, cavilling with their first lessons, inducing doubts in their young minds of my sufficiency as a teacher—encouraging a refractory spirit, and

* This sentence, written in 1839, seems but too prophetic of 1851.—Ed.

rendering my position, when Clotilde could no longer attend, distressing in the extreme.

My brother, on our arrival at Pendyffryn, had assigned to Clotilde an apartment, elegantly fitted up as a morning room, situated on the basement story, and overlooking a portion of pleasure ground fenced off from the park by a light iron paling, and an impervious wall of evergreen. There we carried our favourite authors—our writing materials—called the peaceful retreat our *Souterrain*, and spent many happy hours while my brother was elsewhere engaged. He proposed, before leaving home for Brighton, that a large bay-window should replace its predecessor; also a new chimney-piece and grate, and gave his wife a *carte blanche* for any other alterations she might wish to make.

‘I pass over the Christmas spent at Brighton, where we met the Richardsons; and where, no longer obnoxious to the baneful influence of Mac Cardwell, we were permitted to be at peace. There Charles saw his lovely wife the “observed of all observers”, an object of admiration in every circle, yet devoted to him alone; and if possible, more attractive, more endearing, and more loved than when, one year before, she had pledged him her faith at the altar.

Early in March we returned to Cornwall, and found the Confessor more than ever established in the country, having collected around him a small congregation of formerly scattered Romanists, who, induced by his reported influence, and the command assigned to him of Lady Trevillion’s purse, had sought and found work in the mines.

The general improvements of the house were completed, and some new furniture added; but my great interest was reserved for the *souterrain*.

Clotilde was full of excitement. She ran forward. But never shall I forget the first opening of that door, nor the painful surprise expressed on every feature of my brother, as, recoiling at the threshold, he cast a glance into the most elegantly fitted-up Roman Catholic chapel that it is possible to conceive. The painted glass of the gothic window; the altar piece, with its images, pictures, and candlesticks; the minature, but highly ornamented organ; above all the deep recess, dubiously darkened, and partly concealed by a rich curtain of crimson velvet, which,

half drawn aside, discovered an arm chair, a footstool, a crucifix—in short, a perfect Confessional. One glance sufficed to reveal them all. He had not apprehended, nor could endure such a sight.

Clotilde, absorbed in delight, was blind to his dismay; while, eager to produce the entire effect, she hastened to the organ, seated herself, and began to chant a portion of the evening vespers—I, meantime, to give him an opportunity of recovering self-possession, commenced blowing assiduously. But all was in vain; his self-possession was not to be recalled, and fearful of betraying his feelings unkindly, he hastily rushed from the spot. Such abruptness was to be lamented; but, as he afterwards assured me, his eyes, when he would have fixed them on his wife, were attracted to the deep recess—the half-drawn curtain—the deep arm chair. He pictured Mac Cardwell its occupant, and Clotilde upon her knees; and he thought that his senses must forsake him.

The chant failed—the voice ceased—she tried in vain to command herself; but the disappointment was too severe, and tears fell fast upon her fingers as she tremulously pressed them on the keys.

To relieve her from my observation I arose, and proceeding to examine the pictures, expressed my admiration of their excellence. There was one of St. Louis expiring on his bed of ashes.

‘What a pity,’ I said, ‘to represent St. Louis in an unpleasing position. Why should they place him on a bed of cinders?’

‘Why should they not?’ she observed; ‘can the contrition of one ever so exemplary be too humbly expressed?’

‘Contrition! dearest Clotilde, I am taught, is of the heart; and penance is not repentance. Are we not expressly forbidden to make a display? and why, if self-inflicted punishment can—’

‘We may perhaps speak on this subject again,’ she said, while, interrupting me, she laid her hand gently on my arm.

‘Charles was overcome by surprise,’ I ventured to suggest.

‘And by displeasure’—she added, in a melancholy tone. ‘But let us visit William in his nursery.’

In the nursery she found her husband. He was caressing his son, and immediately, as if to atone for recent offence, placed the child tenderly in its mother’s arms, and for the remainder of the evening sought to conciliate her forgiveness. * * * * *

Spring passed away—summer progressed, and with it the influence of the Roman Catholic Priest. Clotilde gave more time to religious exclusion in her chapel, and there, frequently joined by Mac Cardwell, I of course was excluded. Thus he gained one point, unwitnessed *tête-à-têtes* with his victim.

I could not help remarking on this to my sister. ‘How different, I said, ‘with Doctor Bentley; he never desires to appropriate any one individual to himself; he has no mysteries. You, Clotilde, used to enjoy his visits, to speak with approbation of his benevolence, his mildness, *his truth!*’

‘Yes, Marie, he is pleasing and charitable, and an accomplished gentleman; but he is *not liberal*. He does not come to us as he used to do; your brother gives him no opportunity of meeting my Confessor. I can see that they mutually entertain a prejudice against the latter, that they *will not* know *him*; and I ask you, if this is just, or considerate, on the part of my husband to me?’

Much more did Clotilde say. I could understand that she was severely hurt, but pass over our conversation as too tedious for repetition here. Suffice to acknowledge that I felt we might perhaps act more wisely by meeting the Priest with somewhat more courtesy. I repeated much of what she said on the first opportunity to my brother. I represented to him that ‘it might be better not to make a decided enemy of one who possessed so much influence over the gentle mind of Clotilde; to whose so-called spiritual guidance she yielded her judgment—whom she considered it sacrilege to disobey—whom she imagines that we are unjust to.’

‘What, Mary!’ he said at last, ‘you, too, under his influence? You intercede for the Popish Priest? Methinks we have enough of him already. Believe me that I have granted too much, and that were I to open my door, he would fasten on my hearth—were I to offer him a seat at my table, he would shove himself into my chair. I ask you, if Clotilde is the same candid being that she was? if he has not divided our house? Is it not to him we owe the chapel?—the confessional?—that mystic apartment, from which the husband is excluded, but where the wife pours forth all her heart—even its very imaginings, for aught we know—at command of a parasite whose whole life is a lie, and whose religion imposes hatred and distrust on all who are otherways minded. I should rather, if I did right, turn the incendiary from my door, and

treat the usurper of my rights as I have warrant and power to do, by every law human and divine! I dreamed not, when we married, of Confessors—of soul-dividing interests. I made no conscientious inquiries.'

'Mary,' he continued, 'I am getting very wretched. Religion, the most precious gift of heaven!—the sacred cement of connubial love,—instead of tending to my peace on earth, and leading me to everlasting bliss, is the bane of every joy, consumes me here, and, if a miracle does not intervene, will consume me hereafter! I grieve to seem harsh where my gentle Clotilde is concerned; but remove the embankment, and the waters of strife would inundate us for ever.'

Such being his sentiments, which, had I not wished to remove a prejudice from the mind of Clotilde, would have been avowedly my own, I was obliged for the moment to refrain. But by seizing upon casual opportunities, and availing myself of his tenderness for her, by reiterating persuasions much too prolix for repetition here, I at length gained my point; for, like many sensible persons, he yielded to importunity what was refused to conviction; and instead of repulsing, as Clotilde expressed it, her spiritual guide from the door, my brother politely admitted him, saying to me in a tone of prophetic sadness:

'I very much doubt the wisdom of removing the embankment.'

Alas! his so doing was the beginning of sorrows!

I pass over many preliminary steps by which Mac Cardwell—once admitted to the house—established himself there, and refrain from touching upon aught of painful interest that intervened, until a circumstance occurred in which I was myself included.

On visiting the little school one morning—unaccompanied by my sister—I found all in a state of unexampled confusion, and learnt that the Priest had been there to anathematise a child, one of his flock, whom he had detected reading the Bible, instigated to the crime by an intelligent girl, her Protestant friend. This last not only gave her Bible to the delinquent to read in the school, but allowed her sometimes to carry it home; which, coming to the ear of the Priest, he severely reproved both offenders. But the offence was repeated, the resentment dared

Expulsion was the consequence—expulsion from the school, the mass—the poor child threatened with vengeance of the only true Church against herself, her parents, and family, if she ever again exchanged a word with her heretic seducer.

A score of terrified but indignant voices reiterated this dreadful story, while the few poor slavish creatures calling themselves members of the Holy Catholic Church, almost deafened me with their cries, as the priestly denunciations were repeated to me in their presence. Nor was it without extreme difficulty that, during a stay of two hours, any sort of order could be restored.

On my return homewards, I met the Confessor walking with Lady Trevillion. Having failed to secure my confidence by his flatteries, he had of late assumed in their place a sort of satirical superiority, as if I were a froward child, whose assumption of sense or knowledge merited ridicule alone.

His address at the present moment was peculiarly supercilious, and peeping into the small pocket Bible which I held open in my hand, and which—taken by surprise—I had not time to close, observed with a sneer, ‘that I seemed to be deeply engaged, and that interruption must be unwelcome; and yet,’ he added, ‘if sacred studies are pursued in public places, to be seen of men, what can be offensive in interruptions?’

‘It is not my practice,’ I replied, ‘to pursue sacred subjects in open walks; nor even here—where the path was uninterrupted until now—would I walk with an open Bible in my hand, but am anxious to find by what scriptural authority a christian child may be punished for searching the Scriptures.’

‘O! you allude to Hester Fitz Morris,’ he replied, colouring. ‘And I say that, if a christian minister chooses to direct the reading of his flock, to render their interpretations safe, and that he lays his restrictions, is it not out of kindness and pure love that he should reprove for conscience-sake? “He that spareth the rod spoileth the child”; and again, “A rod and reproof are for wisdom.”’

Turning over to the same authority without other reply, I pointed to the verses: “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the *knowledge* of the holy is understanding.” Again: “Them that seek me early shall find me: for whoso findeth me, findeth life!”

‘And to quote higher authority,’ I ventured to add, after

he cast his eye on these verses; 'permit me, in all reverence, to quote our Saviour himself,' who says, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." Now, sir, how is a child to come to Christ, except through the inspired pages of the Bible—that book which you close on the understanding of a truth-seeking child?

'Understanding, indeed!' reiterated the Priest. 'What has a child like Hester to do with an understanding? I give her an understanding. I feed my pupils on milk—you on strong meats. I teach reverence by mystery—I conceal what I adore. You expose—you familiarize—you teach reading before the alphabet. No wonder then that children set up to enlighten, and that infants pretend to understand!'

I had again looked for a text to prove that I was not without authority, and referred him to those gracious words: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no one cometh to the Father but by me." And, "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they that testify of me."

'You speak, madam, as if we *prohibited* a *knowledge* of the Scriptures, which is grossly untrue. We do not prohibit; we follow the decrees of the Church, which directs that we allow those only to read of whose discretion we are sure. It would doubtless tend much to my edification were I to enter the lists with one of those *necklaces* of the church*—those proselyting young ladies, who, in the usual textuary style, remember such biblical sentences as serve their own purpose, but forget whatever militates against it. May I ask if you have studied the fathers? if you are acquainted with the Council of Trent? if, like some others of your age, and sex, and experience, Hebrew has made part of your education and theology?'

'Oh, sir!' I cried, interrupting him, 'let us have no more such questions. Do not, I pray you, call me a theologian, or a controversialist! few young persons brought up by Christian teachers but know as much—quite as much as myself.'

At this moment we were joined by Dr. Bentley. I was most anxious, in Clotilde's presence, to obtain his solution of 'penance,' and 'absolution'; and that the Priest, taken, unexpectedly, might have no excuse to retreat, I said at once, addressing the former:

* 'An Irish Gentleman in Search of a Religion' for the explanation of 'Necklaces of the Church.'—EDITOR.

'Mr. Mac Cardwell has been holding a very interesting conversation with us.'

'And "he who runs may read,"' replied Dr. Bentley, good humoredly, pointing to the Bible which I held in my hand.

'Not with Mr. Mac Cardwell's permission,' I said; 'for he has just inflicted a penance on one of our school children for reading the Scriptures, and I have been searching if there is biblical authority for such inflictions, as he refuses explanation on the plea that I am ignorant of the ancient languages, and consequently, incapacitated from understanding him.'

'It would sadly restrict religious knowledge,' said Dr. Bentley, 'if the blessed truths of the Gospel could only be apprehended by the classic scholar, or if all persons but those skilled in more tongues than our own, were condemned to dwell in spiritual darkness, as if they were incapable of discerning gospel light. Our translation is correct; it follows the original Greek, and has the word repent, literally signifying a change of heart, while that of Rome translates from the Latin *vulgate*, professing to be corrected from the Greek, and has it, "do penance": except in the case of Judas, where the latter rendering could not be adopted with any show of sense; so they here admit it, and say, "Judas repented." Now, as Christ has made repentance, or renovation of the heart, a necessary condition of the new covenant,* so no term in Scripture should be more thoroughly understood. He gives repentance. We never hear of his inflicting penance. On the contrary, we see the Pharisees rebuked for their dependence on outward forms and formal services, while puffed up with spiritual pride. We all know that the Greek has the original word "repent"; nor would it be departed from by Romish translators but to answer some particular purpose, inconsistent with the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, by whom peace is promised to the broken and contrite sinner, who casts himself entirely on his God—and looks alone in humble hope to the great propitiatory Sacrifice, not to the merits of works, to pains and

'To that species of repentance which, in Scripture, goes by the term *μεταμέτεια*, signifying sorrow for something done, and heartily wishing it undone, forgiveness is nowhere promised. Remission of sins and salvation are only to be expected from a thorough change of the heart and soul—of the life and actions. This is the only repentance (*μετανοια*)

fectual to conversion, and therefore available unto eternal life.'—

* *Pulpit*.

penalties, or to the unscriptural doctrine, that he can, by any act or deed, or punishment inflicted on himself, make restitution to offended justice.'

'Law, as well as gospel,' returned Mac Cardwell, 'imposes punishment for sin, or penance, as well as satisfaction—painful satisfaction; a doctrine, as the Council of Trent has it, in all times most recommended by the holy fathers. Is it not the fear of punishment, the pain of penance, that keeps many a backslider from sin? And when the poor sinner does see the evil of his ways; when he has committed offences, which we all know 'will come,' is not it a comfort to his laden soul, that it can pour itself out at the foot of the cross, presented by the Priest in the temple, and be assured, from the lips of that Priest, that his prayer is accepted—that his sin is absolved—that he needs not to despair? that the words, "Thy sins are forgiven," are applied to his case, when uttered by those who are delegated to pronounce them? Well may it be said, that the Reformed church is a novelty, when doctrine so perfectly taught by the ancient fathers is rejected by those who call themselves of the Reformed church. They who were competent to understand the Scriptures, grounded their doctrine on those oracles of the Lord. Although I am not bound, indeed hardly permitted 'to gild refined gold, or paint the lily,' I will just instance one example out of many. When Christ says, "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it; because they did penance at the preaching of Jonas," in what did that repentance, as you choose to term it, consist?—In doing penance in sack-cloth and ashes, in fasting for three days, in not suffering even their cattle to eat anything during that period. And what says the Rhemish note, on the iiird chapter of St. Matthew, 2nd verse, as regards the rendering, "do penance"? Does not it say, 'so is the Latin word; and it is a very usual speech in the New Testament to signify perfect repentance, which hath not only confession and amendment, but contrition or sorrow for offence, with painful satisfaction; such as St. Cyprian speaketh of in his epistles?'"

'Allow me,' interposed Doctor Bentley, 'to answer your quotation in the words of Fulk, from his Rhemish notes, viz. "When you understand by penance satisfaction for sins, 'do penance' is not English, at least it is not a correct English translation of the Latin *agite penitentiam*, either in word or sense* ; and your own

* I see no difficulty in the Latin: it is the best translation that that lan-

translation of the same Greek word in Mark i, 15, shows this plainly. As for the painful satisfaction of which St. Cyprian speaks, it means a satisfaction to the Church for apostacy, not satisfaction to God's justice for sin, which could alone be rendered by Christ. By this means the primitive church required inward sorrow of heart for apostacy, caused by fear and persecution.' Such is the answer of Fulk—such must be the opinion of every Christian who is taught to value the gracious invitation of our blessed Lord to cast their burden upon Him alone. He says expressly, "Rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn to the Lord your God." How then can it be pretended that doctrine such as this, emanating from the Saviour himself, is novel. No, sir; it is not. The Reformed church separated from that of Rome, on account of novelties introduced by the latter, especially as regards idolatry. Look to St. Paul's epistle to the apostolic church in the first century of the Christian era; and you will see how the church of the present day has departed from the faith once delivered to the saints. St Paul foretells this falling off, when he says to Timothy, "that in latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving ear to seducing spirits, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thankfulness." Can we read these words, and deny in our hearts that the Church of Rome hath departed? hath introduced novel doctrines? And this brings me back to penance, which is indeed a novelty.'

'No, Sir,' interrupted the Priest, his eyes flashing fire, "penance is not a novelty. Neither has the ancient church departed. Neither can she depart. Has not the Great Head of that church declared, in his own words, "that He would be with it always, even unto the end," to protect it from error? And, after this, can you deny that it is unchangeable?—that it is a pillar and ground of truth, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail? We do not say that none of her ministers have departed—far from it; but we all acknowledge infallibility is attached to the body as a whole; that it rests with the pastors connected with their head: and if I am asked, how can this be?—how a body of sinful men can give infallu-
 guage will admit of the word *μετανοειν*. The error seems to have arisen from the verb *agere*. An action is at the first blush implied, which, after a moment's consideration, will not be found to exist. We all know that *agere otium* signifies to be at leisure, *agere vitam* to live, so *agere penitentiam* should be rendered to repent.—*Editor*.

kible decisions? I answer, "By the power of God." As God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul, so Christ has breathed on his disciples, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." The spirit thus communicated to man is retained in the church; and man, however fallible, may, and shall to the end of the world, guided by this infallible Paraclete, give an infallible interpretation of the truth. Man may err, Popes may err, Councils may contradict councils, but the promise to the church is sure. "I shall be with you always;" and in the body of the pastors that promise is fixed—so sure as the word is Christ's.

To this assumption of infallibility Doctor Bentley replied by quoting the words of St. Paul, where he said to the ancient church of Rome, 'Be not high minded, but fear; for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed that he spare not thee.' That is, if you continue not in the faith, you shall be cut off: 'a salutary warning,' he added, 'to the high pretensions of the Romish church—pretensions grounded alone on the supposition that our Saviour's words applied exclusively to Peter, who might have answered as spokesman for the other Apostles, or have been answered in the same sense. Or otherwise these pretensions assume that Rome was the see where he established his theological chair. So that the whole fabric of the Romish supremacy rests on the doubtful question, "Whether it was on Peter's person, or his faith, the church was built," St. Hilary, St. Augustine, and Bede, all, in several places, affirm that it was his faith. These ancient fathers decide for this rock of confession; and surely the doubt such direct testimonies cast upon the Romish doctrine is enough. I would establish that doubt, in order that the sinner might be led to Christ, the Rock of ages—that thus induced, he might open the page of inspiration, and let escape that blaze of light which can alone dispel his darkness. I would disprove from the Epistles of St. Paul, which were written from the year 54 to 66, and from the Acts of the Apostles, that Peter was, for the thirty-seven first years of the apostolic church, spoken of as Bishop of Rome. And I would ask how unlikely—or rather, I would demonstrate how impossible—it was for him to fix his chair in that city, where St. Paul (however copious in his mention of numerous Christians dwelling there) never

notices him in six of his epistles, written from thence to other churches and people. Neither does he recognise him in the Epistle to the Romans as head of that church, nor in any way connected with it: but rather condemns him as alienated, when he says, in writing to the Galatians, "that he withstood Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed for unfaithful conformity to the Jews, when he walked not according to the truth of the Gospel." Let us only suppose a bishop of the present day writing from Rome, or writing to the church at Rome, on the whole range of doctrine and practice of the christian church, and never noticing the Pope as in any way connected with such vital interests. Surely such a supposition would be most absurd! And yet on the prelacy of Peter the Romish church builds her supremacy—a position more frail, surely, than the foundation-stone of such a building ought to rest upon. And, O! what an awful consideration, to have immortal souls clinging to points of history so very debatable, nay, so utterly untenable, upon which so many of the learned disagree, and for which there is no warrant in the written word of God!

The Priest grew impatient. It was probable that he repented having allowed Clotilde to remain. Endeavouring to cut Dr. Bentley short, he corrected him from wandering from the point; adding, rather rudely, 'Declamation is very easy, and no doubt very fine; but it does not establish a position.'

'I would wish to establish my position, and to disprove the infallibility of your church, simply on those doubts I have thrown out this moment, and am satisfied to rest my argument on the caution of St. Paul already noticed, coupled with the fact, that the churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria have erred; and to infer that it is therefore possible for the church of Rome to err. These were members of the church universal—so was Rome: they have erred, by departing from the faith—so may any local church. Therefore all who build on a local church, and not on the faith as in Christ, may be in error. I ask no more than the doubts contained in this possibility to show, that those souls are indeed in an awful predicament which rest upon the infallibility of the Romish church. And, as I remarked before, I would establish that doubt in order that the sinner might be led to understand the mighty truth that "there is no

other name under heaven given among men whereby he may be saved," than Christ alone.'

'And do we say that there is any other?' demanded Mac Cardwell, sharply. 'Do I teach that Christ is not the chief corner-stone which God laid in Zion? When we maintain that Christ has delegated his authority to Peter and the successors of Peter, and thus contend for the integrity of his decrees, do we deny his faith? No, Sir. Protestants are ever libelling us by assuming that we built our church on the sand;—a church that has stood the shock of ages—against which the floods have burst, and the storms have raged, but which still stands a proud monument of durability—of unity—of universality.'

'Protestants also assert that we dishonor the faith of the Gospel, when we interpret Christ's words as referring to Peter, and not to the faith he professed;—we who, if there is faith on earth, possess it;—we, who take up our cross daily, denying ungodliness and fleshly lusts—who are poor and despised, clothed in sackcloth and ashes, and treated by the Church of England, as she designates herself, like aliens and outlaws; while the same phantom of Christianity, calling itself elect, but bloated and luxurious, carrying bigotry and blood in its infuriated aspect, rides rough-shod over the necks of a degraded multitude, an enslaved majority, which it is the object either to render apostate, or to exterminate.'

'Declamation is not argument, as you, Mr. Mac Cardwell, observed but a few minutes since; neither is it quite fair to make broad assertions without corresponding proofs, although it may be a permitted novelty of the present day. We will, if you please, wave declamation or accusation, and try to convince the reason rather than to confuse the sense. Above all, we will adhere to facts.'

'Meaning by facts, a few distorted texts of Scripture purposely extracted,' interposed the Priest, impatiently. 'These, Doctor Bentley, will never convince me; neither will the reasoning of an apostate from the ancient faith shake my attachment to that church which is from the beginning, and shall last unto the end, despite that bloodthirsty tyrant and ghostly reformer, Henry the Eighth of England, with his obsequious tools, the recanting Cranmer and the subtle Latimer. Say what you will, the historic assertions of Protestants, that the Reformation was begun

before Henry's quarrel with the head of his church, is not founded upon fact—they being mere assertions without proof.

'Hume dates the Reformation from that quarrel. Hume makes that tyrant—as the same tyrant did himself—the founder of the Protestant church, as established by law in England, with lust and rapine for its inauspicious parents. It is only surprising to me that English people—except that they love a convenient creed—have not yet learned to judge of a stream by the well from which it issues.'

'If the people of England,' resumed Doctor Bentley, 'have not learned to identify their religion with the life and character of Henry, they have at least sagacity enough to develop the weakness of an opposite cause, which has recourse to this false, though popular objection. Henry was a rough instrument in the hands of an all-wise Providence for breaking the long-riveted chain of papal supremacy and domination; but he was not the founder of the Protestant faith. A slight reference to historical data will suffice to defend the Reformed church from a stigma, which Roman Catholics, in lieu of better founded reproaches, cast upon it.

'It suffices to refer to the melancholy fate of Lord Cobham, and to the burning of William Sautre, Rector of St. Osith's, in London—consequent upon their adhesion to the preaching of Wickliff in the very commencement of the fifteenth century—to prove that, long previous to the quarrel of Henry with the Pope, Englishmen's minds had revolted from the domination and the idolatries of a corrupted church. Henry the Eighth!—he was not the founder of reform, or even a partaker in the Reformed faith. He lived and died a Roman Catholic, though not, I am ready to admit, in the *political* meaning of the word, a Papist.* He sent many a martyr to the stake for denying the real Presence. He left money in his will to pay for masses for his soul. No; the Reformation was in other hands, whose sincerity of profession and belief was sealed with a crown of martyrdom. And, as in apostolic times, the word of God grew and multiplied, despite regal authority and wordly ambition; so, while Henry and the Pope were pushing their separate ends, and over-reaching each

* The execution of the Prior and several of the brethren of the Carthusian monastery, for denying the King's supremacy, was amongst the most barbarous transactions of this period.

other in earthly objects, a superior Power was directing the progress of the spiritual kingdom, by the instrumentality of sinful man. Read the history of these times by the free-thinking Hume—a writer just quoted by yourself, who denies both creeds—and you must recognise the wonderful workings of Providence in carrying on the Reformation under trials and persecutions of the most formidable kind. The King of England and the Romish Pontiff were alike stirred up by a higher power to consummate the downfall of papal domination, through the instrumentality of their own selfish and personal interests. The Popedom was in danger from a simoniacal transaction with the Cardinal Colono, at the time of his election; which, combined with the desire or restoring to his family the dominion of Florence, induced him to sacrifice his promises, and risk all the interests of the Roman Catholic church. These schemes, hurrying on the destruction of monastic establishments and papal exactions, exhibit the mysterious power of Him who says, that “he will make the wrath of man to praise himself.” The subsequent calm under Edward, to settle as it were the incipient Reformation; the violent persecutions by Mary, to try to “purge and make white”; followed by the long reign of Elizabeth to establish a Reformed church—all these secondary causes are instructively similar to those of the first ages of Christianity, when kings and high priests worked the will of Jehovah by persecution and death. The church having rest throughout all countries, being edified, and having comfort of the Holy Ghost, was multiplied, enduring perilous days of martyrdom under Nero and others, until at last Constantine became its nursing-father, as our Elizabeth was its nursing-mother. This similarity makes the reproaches thrown upon the one no less applicable to the other, and altogether suggests a conclusion to which a Roman Catholic defender might not like to come.

‘Very ingenious, indeed!’ retorted the Priest; ‘and a parallel, which, on first sight, may seem to suit the purpose; but, while drawing it, you please to forget that the principal feature of this all-boasted Reformation, and its propelling cause, was avarice; nothing appearing so conspicuous during that disastrous era as the unholy zeal of rapacious reformers to criminate the innocent possessors of coveted lands and ecclesiastical benefices; seeking every pretext to render their holders obnoxious, in order to furnish an excuse for spoliation. The kingdom of this world, the attainment

of power, the appropriation of riches, and not the kingdom of heaven, being indubitably their object and their pursuit.'

'The pursuit of Henry's courtiers,' interposed Dr. Bentley, 'not of the framers and builders of the Reformation. Houses and lands were little sought, and could have been scarcely coveted by men who risked, and finally sacrificed, their lives for the faith which they professed. In the primitive church there were, we know, those who clave for lucre's sake. Judas held the bag, and finally sold his Master; but he was not a propagator of the Gospel. Amongst the martyrs, during Mary's short but dismal reign, will be found the major part of the original Reformers; and these men, with pardon in one hand and the faggot in the other, deserved not the character of worldly-mindedness.'

'It is hard to say how such zealots were minded,' returned Mac Cardwell; 'and, as they lighted the brand, what wonder if it scorched them? The pride of party, the idle, wicked boast of founding a new faith, will carry certain temperaments very far. At all events, as Hume gives his opinion, these were motives sufficient to induce the pains of martyrdom.'

'I am quite ready to admit,' returned the Doctor, 'that Hume may be good historical authority. He may also be cited as a reference for historical facts. But I should not expect to have his opinions adopted by a professing minister of a Christian church. Such a sentiment as that you have instanced, might equally apply to Paul or Peter—a length which, I trust, you would not like to go. We will, therefore, allow those whose sincerity was sealed in blood, the credit of honest conviction; and unto those who honestly follow their opinions, though not yet called upon to give the same proof of faith, the charitable construction of thinking no evil. But we have diverged from our first question. You have not given us Scripture proof of your authority for denying to your flock the free use of Scripture-reading.'

'All in good time,' replied Mac Cardwell, evasively. 'Your charitable construction comes in most opportunely; it puts me in mind of the poor creatures, Protestants as well as Catholics, who are waiting for her ladyship's bounty; and who may put no such construction on my delay. If they do, it is much more than I deserve, for wasting time in talk that should be given to works—however reformers, and such like, may despise the same, or call such works "self-righteousness." Her ladyship is blessed with

the means; she knows how to apply them, she understands their efficacy; she has true charity; she is aware that it is acceptable—that it lays up a store in heaven against a day of wrath—"that it covereth a multitude of sins—that there are faith, hope, charity, these three, but that the greatest of these is charity."

'I trust that her Ladyship is also aware that charity is tried, long-suffering, and humble. That "it thinketh no evil—vaunteth not itself—is not puffed up." I trust that she understands the difference between spiritual charity, and the mere acts, however salutary, of alms-giving.'

'The tree is known by its fruits, Doctor, and I must no longer neglect to dispense those fruits. Good morning, Sir; good morning, Miss Trevillion. There is something still to be settled, my lady, between your ladyship and me, concerning this same charity; will you proceed, or return to the house?'

Clotilde, who had appeared extremely interested in the discussion, and who evidently was disappointed at its being brought to so abrupt a termination, durst not, however, betray her wishes. She took the hint, and was returning toward the house, when I ventured to accuse the Confessor of evasion. I told him that he had given us no explanation whatever of penance, its origin, obligations, or uses; and that as to satisfaction, meaning the righteousness which justifies, he had not touched upon the subject. And I ended my expostulation by saying: 'Surely, Sir, there can be no objection to your enlightening me on these points, even in the presence of my sister.'

'I can have no wish,' he replied, 'to prevent Lady Trevillion hearing a repetition of those truths, as set forth by her church; or even subjecting her to the same penance as I have endured this last half hour—I mean that of listening while my church was so unjustly attacked, without attempting to refute what I could have refuted word for word, only that it is our system to let the adversary expose his own weakness, wherein is our strength. Since, however, you desire information on some peculiar points of our doctrine, information you shall have. Let us take the righteousness which justifies, which is a divine spiritual quality, making the soul amiable and gracious in the sight of God, and therefore termed grace. This same purifieth all the stains of sin; and by it, through the merits of Christ, we are delivered both from sin and eternal death. This grace is supplied by infusion, is capable of

increase, which increase is merited by good works; the first receipt whereof is the first justification, the increase whereof is the second justification. As grace may be increased by the merits of good works, so it may be diminished by the demerits of venial sins, or it may be lost by mortal sin. If I am asked how you are to repair in one sense, and recover in another, I answer, "You repair by the sprinkling of holy water, by using the sign of the cross, by saying Ave Marias, and such like. Those who have lost it by mortal sin; may recover it by the sacrament of penance; which sacrament has the power to confer grace anew, though that power is not so great at first as it was originally, for it only cleanseth out the stain of sin committed, and changeth its eternal punishment, if time serve—if not, it must be endured hereafter; except it be lightened by masses, works of charity, pilgrimages, fastings; or else abridged by pardon for term; or else, by plenary pardon, quite removed."* And this, Miss Trevillion, is the way in which our church teaches that man may be saved. I leave you to compare it with the "Lord save me, I perish," of reformers, who boast of casting all their care upon Christ, yet bear none of the burden themselves; who talk fast enough of the "thief on the cross", but forget the parable of the fig-tree.'

Saying thus, he was on the point of moving away, but Doctor Bentley interposed.

'Nay, sir,' he cried; 'you must not thus easily think to escape. You must allow me, before we part, to reply in a few words to the doctrine just promulged, lest silence be construed into assent to tenets totally opposed to those of St. Paul. Whether you speak of the first or the second justification, you make it a righteousness which is in us. Now the righteousness wherein we must be found, in order to be justified, is not our own. It is not in us; for the apostle Paul, in the Epistle to the Philippians, iii, 8, 9, says: "He counted all things loss, and counted them to be dung, that he might win Christ, and be found in him; not having his own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith."

'Christ has merited righteousness for as many as are found in him. In him God finds us, if we be faithful; for by faith we

* See Hooker on Justification. The History of the Council of Trent on Justification and Penance; and Bishop Burnet on the XIth Article.

are incorporated into Christ. Then, though in ourselves we are altogether sinful and unworthy, yet being found in Christ, through faith, and repenting of our sins, God puts away our sins, by not imputing them to us (as the Gospel shows in the fifth chapter of Romans), and counts us righteous as he counted Abraham, viz. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." As much so as if he had been in an entire course of obedience*.

'God made Christ "to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." You see here Sir, that your church, by teaching justification by inherent grace, teaches otherwise than the apostles taught. Examine the whole of St. Paul's arguments in the Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, and you will see, that there is no foundation whatever for the Romish doctrine of inherent righteousness for justification. But I deny not that the righteousness of sanctification is inherent. Unless we work we have it not. I distinguish it as a thing, in its nature, different from the righteousness of justification. We have this latter if we have the faith of Abraham. As in Romans, fourth chapter, sixth verse: "to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth, faith is counted for righteousness." We have the former if we work righteousness, as in 1st John iii, 7: "he is righteous who worketh righteousness." St. Paul proves that we have the one by faith without works, from the example of Abraham. St. James shows that we have the other by works from Abraham also.

'Be assured, Sir, that there is no man's case so dangerous as that of him whom Satan has persuaded, that his own merits shall place him pure and blameless in the sight of God. Could we even say that we were unconscious of guilt, should we therefore plead "not guilty" before God, who sees further into our hearts than we ourselves can see? If our hands have not offered violence to our neighbors, a revengeful thought, in the eyes of God, condemns us as murderers; in his sight a lustful look is adultery; the eye of cupidity is theft. If we did not commit the positive sins, which daily and hourly in thought, word, or deed we are answerable for, yet in our good things how many defects are intermingled! God respects the mind and intentions; if then we abstract all those things which man does to please man, to cater to his own

* See Burnet.

instinctive love of approbation or self-interest, to satisfy his own desires—those things which we do with an aim, and for respect, not piously, sincerely, and purely for the love of God; what a small portion shall we have to set down as meritorious acts! What iniquity lurks in our holiest offerings! We are never better affected than when we pray; yet, even in those moments how are our affections many times distracted!—how little reverence do we show in the presence of an all-seeing God!—how little remorse for sin!—how little do we, in reality, draw near to God, and taste of the influence of his tender mercies!—how unwilling are we to begin!—how full of the leavings of Satan are our supplications!—how glad are we to end! Yet God condemns those who “draw near unto him with the lips only, while the heart is far off.”

‘Oh, Sir! could you or I this day presume to call Him to account, or demand our pardons in virtue of our works, and our deservings! No; in our holy thoughts there is iniquity, when compared with the requirements of God’s holy law: viewed by the same touchstone there are misdoings in every act of our lives. Let the self-justifying Romanist, or the worldly-minded Protestant, call my opinions what they may, I am content to stand by the offers of the Gospel, and depend on being justified freely by God’s grace, through the redemption which is in Christ.’

‘We will moot this point on a more favorable opportunity,’ said the Priest. ‘I am perfectly willing to enter the lists, either with yourself or Miss Trevillion; so brush up your learning, young lady, for I promise you it shall be put to the test: albeit it is not in my recollection that the females, who were admonished to keep silence, or to adorn themselves in shamefacedness, the poor widow who cast all she had into the treasury, or she that anointed our Saviour’s head with oil, and wiped his feet with her hair, were any of them accepted for their learning.’

‘They sought instruction, however, as Miss Trevillion does,’ interposed my kind friend; ‘and they honored their Lord in their humility. She knows that the perfection of the Christian character consists in an earnest desire and steady pursuit of progressive improvement; and she says, with the Ethiopian: “How can I understand, unless some man will teach me?”’

Mac Cardwell made no answer, but, bowing to the Doctor, and asking Clotilde if she were ready, attended her to the house.

‘The Confessor fears,’ said my companion, as he also moved

away, 'that if Lady Trevillion were to remain with us now, I should take advantage of his absence, and protest against the monstrous absurdities of what he calls his expositions; but in this he is mistaken. If she be permitted to hear us together, it is full as much as I desire—and more, I am afraid, than we can calculate upon.'

'I have,' I replied, 'seen her deep interest in much that you have brought forth; her bright beams of intelligence. I have likewise witnessed Mac Cardwell's frown, and his victim quail beneath it.

"Seen his appalling look, inscrutable!
Yet scrutinising all; citing to judgment
Each passing thought, each word, each wish."

Poor Clotilde! she was indeed a slave! and if not at this hour released by the pitying hand of Heaven, is still a miserable slave; loathing, perhaps, her chains; torn by remorse—pining for liberty—and yet laden so heavily that it is impossible to move!

CHAPTER VI.

As the Confessor's health seemed to be perfectly good, and as we had heard nothing for some months of his cough, I was silly enough to cherish the flattering hope, that he might return before autumn to his duties in the Sister-island, of whose wrongs, oppressions, and absentees he was always complaining. But, alas! the removal of the malady by no means facilitated the departure of the *malade*, who seemed rather to be established as a fixture, and that not only for the autumn but for the ensuing winter. Many comforts, in the way of furniture, etc. etc. were, as we were told, added of late to his lodgings, the outward appearance of which indicated a considerable improvement in the ways and means of their humble proprietor, whose reverend lodger—by familiar intercourse with the lower classes, and the indulgence of *aside* invectives against every existing restraint, but above all by his influence, owing to his control over the charities of Lady Trevillion—was fast founding for himself a popular reputation; while his inhibition (so to speak) of Doctor Bentley, by prohibiting all scriptural allusions and conversation in the hearing of Clotilde, was as practical an infliction of tyranny as any 'hereditary slave-driver,' to adopt a favorite figure of his own, could possibly enact.

Owing to this inhibition, which caused a very perceptible disappointment to the inquiring mind of Clotilde, and roused all the free-born English woman in my heart, the morning calls and week-day visits of our good Pastor were now becoming rare. Nor could we expect any other result from the subsequent conduct of the Priest, who, once permitted to enter the arena of argument with a person so very much his superior, forgetful of his own previous position, thought fit to drop the

mask of politeness, and lay aside the humility with which his first advances were made. Rudely declining any further contest, he assumed, except in presence of my brother, the attitude of one who has already conquered. But, though the covert malignity or open impertinence of Mac Cardwell thus drove Doctor Bentley from our private society—though I, myself, became a mark for the satirical scorn of the Confessor, I could not lament what had passed. I could not regret any means by which the seed might be scattered. However sterile the season, however blighting the influence, it might germinate; and, if so, no matter how late—no matter at what or whose cost—no matter how long it lay in the ground before it showed a blade; its fruits, if they ripened, must be sure to compensate for all.

Had Charles been less busily engaged at this time, or had he observed with more interest the politics of our domestic cabinet, this system of intolerance must have had its termination, and the crisis been accelerated to which we were fast drawing on. But the progress of improvement, both within doors and without, by no means accorded with his impatience. Autumn had begun, the long days were over, yet brick, mortar, and paint were not cleared away. Very few of our relations had as yet seen Clotilde; but some who had looked coldly on the marriage, and whom my brother most esteemed, were by this time more cordially disposed; and, having promised to visit us at Christmas, he anxiously anticipated their introduction to his fascinating wife.

But her fascinations were, alas! on the wane. She had lost that playful hilarity of manner which had been so peculiarly tempered by feminine gentleness, while a watchful, uneasy expression clouded her once happy countenance. The remoteness of the neighborhood, and the open state of the building, had as yet precluded the reception of company. As the growing influence of the Confessor and Clotilde's acquired seriousness might alike, in some respects, be attributable to our exclusive habits, which afforded him such uninterrupted opportunities, my hopes for the restoration of her cheerfulness depended on some additional society. There were, however, three months before us of seclusion, of vulgar encroachment, and of quotidian annoyance, which, though I united with Clotilde to soften or conceal, was ever on the point of causing an outbreak.

Meanwhile, in her most interesting mind 'the genius and the moral instruments were in council'; and her nature, 'like to a little kingdom', suffered insurrection. She frequently betrayed a thirst for inquiry; and there was a very evident internal working of conflicts. But, as if fearful of lapses, she adhered more strictly than ever to forms and ceremonies. Severe penances I knew her to endure; and fasts, such as she really practised in that sense, were often recurred to.

Charles could not shut his eyes to the alteration in his gentle and once brilliant wife. He wished his relations to see her, if possible, as she was; and proposed to me that we should remove from home until the drawing near of Christmas, when those (our relatives) might be expected to join us.

'Marie!' he said, "we must break this connection! I love my sweet Clotilde better than life, but cannot answer for myself, if she continues to be influenced as I see that she is. The home of my fathers becomes hateful: if it were not out of pity and tenderness for *her*, I would spurn this incendiary with the contempt he deserves, and drive him from my door for ever." Something I must do. Peace we must seek. You must break to her, my sister, that we are about to leave home. It may be a weakness not to do so myself. But were she to hesitate—were she to receive the communication as if it pained her, I might enact some imprudence! I might hurt her feelings.'

I had wished for some time that we might go elsewhere; and answered at once for my sister's cheerful compliance, adding: 'it will indeed be a relief to get away from the *surveillance* of a Popish dictator.'

As I spoke the word we both, at the same moment, espied that obnoxious character walking with stealthy step towards the house. He saw us, and turned shortly away.

Charles called on him to stop. 'This is not to be borne,' he said to me. 'He was intending to get in through the bay-window. He must be taught a different route—'tis disgraceful.'

We saw that the Confessor hesitated; but Charles repeated his call—when, slackening his pace, he reluctantly advanced to where we waited him.

'I am going to Exeter to-morrow,' he began; 'and was coming to see if you had any commands.'

'None in the world, Sir, but to wish you a good journey. But why not come directly to the hall-door? I intend to leave Pendyffryn myself in a very few days, and my family will accompany me. Therefore your office as Confessor to Lady Trevillion must cease. She shall not be without opportunities of seeing a Confessor, but must find him elsewhere. I use no disguise, Mr. Mac Cardwell, and conclude upon this understanding that it will be as agreeable to all parties, if you return no more.'

The Priest looked astounded—for a moment subdued; but immediately rallying, exclaimed in real or well-feigned surprise:

'Is it me not come back? Is it not use my own freedom to live where I like? No, Sir: I'm none of your slave!—and if it were in the power of Sir Charles Trevillion to outlaw the Catholic Priest, he would find his way back from the remotest corner of the earth; or if it suited his purpose to land at the door here, or in the very ocean before us; it's not the lord of Pendyffryn, or any other oppressor, that should chain him to his ship like a galley-slave.'

'We know nothing of oppression in Protestant England,' resumed Charles; 'such words are idle figures of speech. From the king to the beggar, every man's house is his castle.'

'Except the humble roof which shelters a servant of the holy church, which I am desired to quit. But power shall not drive me from my duty, Sir; I shall remain and protect (so far as the means are mine) the persecuted, despised, defenceless children of the cross, by guarding them from coercion to apostacy.'

'Your language, Mr. Mac Cardwell, is unintelligible,' replied Charles; 'but that mine may be understood, I take leave to repeat that the object in view is neither apostacy nor coercion. Lady Trevillion, however, must be released from the tyranny of her present Confessor—and, should authority be wanting to effect that release, you may rely on my word that it shall not be withheld!'

The Confessor was enraged; he forgot himself, and inquired, without the slightest mask of moderation, 'What sort of release he was talking of?'

'Release from the tyrannies of superstitious bigotry,' replied Charles; 'restoration to freedom of will, and liberty of conscience.'

'Which is as much as to say, that you will take charge of her conscience yourself. But you are mistaken, Sir. Though in person the slave of a reformer, she is in spirit the devoted servant of the ancient faith: and will neither swerve, nor be forsaken, nor see with the eyes of a Protestant ruler.'

'Neither with the eyes of a domineering Confessor,' retorted my brother, very much provoked, 'But I came not in your way, Sir, to tempt a vulgar quarrel—or to engage in disputations which I despise. I came to relieve my wife from tribulation and persecution, and to render that release the more immediate, I now wish you good morning in her name.'

'Merciful heaven!' exclaimed the Priest; 'if this be English liberty!—if this be Protestant protection—may the mother of mercies, the virgin queen, be thy guardian and deliverer, most unhappy lady!'

'Mistake me not, Sir,' said my brother, turning back; 'Lady Trevillion ever has, and ever shall have the perfect enjoyment of religious liberty: she shall neither be debarred of a church nor of a Confessor, although Mr. Mac Cardwell do not attend her himself.'

'Oh, Sir Charles! beware! let not a low-minded jealousy of the Confessor pass off as disapprobation of the confessional. Let—'

'Hold!' cried Charles, interrupting him; 'you tempt a strong arm, ever ready to chastise impertinence, and had best to return whence you have come.'

'No!'—exclaimed the Priest in his turn; 'No!—courageous as is the lord of Pendyffryn, the hater of the Catholic priest—that same lord dare not raise his hand against a defenceless man—protected only by his sacred vows, although ready at any risk to defend Lady Trevillion, and guard her precious conscience against the interference of heresies.'

'Defend!—guard!' cried my brother, who had borne with the insolent looks and insinuations of Mac Cardwell till patience could bear no more; 'whom would you defend?—whom dare to interfere with?'

'I would defend your wife, Sir Charles Trevillion, from the tender mercies of an heretic husband—whose jealousies would extend to her spiritual guide. Yes, Sir, with my life would I defend her.'

‘Defend yourself! vile incendiary!’ exclaimed the exasperated husband, elevating his cane; ‘if you have one spark of courage—one pulse of manhood, stand to it, and defend yourself.’

‘Sir Charles! Sir Charles!’ cried the half-frightened boaster; ‘I am a stranger—I am defenceless. Miss Trevillion, you look on—you are a witness.’

‘Abject being!’ said Charles; ‘you are beneath the notice of a man! Begone!’

‘Oh! go, Mr. Mac Cardwell,’ I entreated; ‘for the love of Heaven, do not tempt my brother!’

But I had no need to put myself into an agony. Having tempted my brother to threaten an assault, his object was effected; but, feeling no desire for the actual infliction, he turned abruptly away, stretched off through the plantation with his usual long stealthy stride, and was soon out of sight.

CHAPTER VII.

It was well, in my brother's very sensitive state of feeling: that he had directed me to impart his intentions to his wife; for her objections to leaving home, though perfectly natural, might, under the circumstances, have led to wrong conclusions. But, after speaking with me some time on the subject, she got over her surprise, and perhaps suspected his motives. When we all met again in an hour or two afterwards, she only expressed a few motherly fears, lest the fatigue of the journey might be injurious to her son. These fears were, however, overruled by the father, who promised that we should travel by easy stages, and consult his health throughout.

Plans were formed—Brighton again preferred—and every one seemed pleased, Charles especially, whose good temper was perfectly restored, and who invited us to accompany him on an inspection of his late improvements.

The country, though late in September, never looked more beautiful. Autumn approached us by the gentlest stages. The weather was serene—the evenings sultry; and we prolonged our ramble to the beach, which, composed of hard and level sands, afforded at low water a delightful ride, extending several miles in a south-easterly direction; while to the right, immediately adjoining the park, an abrupt projection of low dark rocks, and the precipitous cliffs by which they were surmounted, jutting far out into the water, formed a promontory, at once the refuge or the destruction, according to the setting of the wind, of such adventurous sailors as ignorantly tempted their fate in the treacherous bay of Pendyffryn. These rocks, their grotesque forms rising variously above the ebbing tide, or broken over by the foaming spray, were picturesque in the highest degree. To

pass along the summit of the reef at low water-mark, was just practicable for zealous pedestrians like ourselves; and we, this evening, ventured to their extreme termination, reaching it at that radiant hour when the glorious orb of day departs from our visible hemisphere. Not a cloud obscured the rich lustre of the west, or interfered with the magnificent phenomenon which rewarded our perseverance. This was the appearance of two globular lights, both perfectly distinct; the one slowly pursuing its downward course in the refulgent heavens; the other holding a parallel track in the bright mirror of the golden sea, until meeting, ere their final exit, they blended into one, the real with the imaginative, and sank together in a blaze of light, as if the fires of a thousand worlds waited to receive them.

It was, indeed, a sight of surpassing loveliness; and none felt it more deeply than Clotilde, who delighted in the study of astronomy, as a reflecting and pious mind delights in all that leads it from terrestrial to celestial contemplations. Nor was Charles, though less enthusiastic, the less sensible of those calm, but elevating impressions, with which, when surrounded only by the silent deep, and far removed from earth's distractions, he had been wont to indulge.

The sea-beach was, therefore, with both a favorite haunt, for both loved the thoughts which it engendered; and during the happy period of the preceding autumn, we had often lingered there until the subdued and mystic gleamings of the starry firmament just served to show the luminous distinction between sea and land, but left the dark back-ground of both impenetrable. But these sweet evening walks had lately lost their charm, for the spirit of harmony was, alas! departing from us. On the present occasion that sweet spirit seemed to have returned. Charles, perhaps, vexed at his want of perfect self-command in the rencontre of the morning, expressed a tacit contrition in his manner toward Clotilde; while she, whose spirit was that of conciliation itself, more than met those tokens of renewed affection, on the continuation of which her very life depended.

The evening, as I have said, was sultry. We sat down on a rock to rest, and to wait the bringing to of some small fishing boats, whose sails still caught the waning light, while a long line of larger vessels, at a greater distance, were passing in bold relief against the illuminated sky, or moving westward, were

descending apparently into the same liquid furnace which had already entombed their great precursor. Nor did we leave our attractive resting-place until these stately vessels were no longer to be seen, until the last glories of the horizon faded away, and until the few scattered craft which still dared the dangers of a lee-shore in the equinoctial season, were heard, rather than distinguished, in the increasing darkness.

'Reluctantly at length we arose, for never did the coming night more incline us to the enjoyment of contemplation. Never was the air so hushed, or more soothing; yet some appearances began presently to manifest themselves toward the north, which denoted a change; and sounds of the returning waves became louder and louder in a point, which indicated to experienced ears that there was no depending on the present calm; while, as we retraced our steps along the slippery reef, many an *avant courier* of tempestuous weather was seen to wing his way toward the protecting cliffs.

These cliffs, abounding in natural cavities, abounded also in the marvellous. Superstition attached to the most inaccessible an interior of no mean extent, and a tenantry by no means innoxious. It was a fairy land; and there were voices heard in the dead silence of the night, and cries that out-screamed the storm. Other rocky cells were fraught with legends of death and piracy, which I had often listened to as a child, and which were recollected while the funeral gloom of the fast closing evening gave to their towering and fantastic roofs, and to their darkened porches, an undefined and awful character.

Having recrossed the rocks, we approached the lowest of those sparry caverns; and listened at its mysterious entrance to the melancholy murmurings of the wind, which, collecting within, were sufficient to create alarm in minds not accustomed to combat with supernatural terrors.

'The gale comes on apace,' observed Charles, again pointing to the north; 'how rapidly the clouds collect, and at what a rate the moon appears to travel. I fear it will prove an angry night; and, unluckily, the beacon is gone out of order.'

'The peasantry,' I remarked, 'are silly enough to believe that its failure is connected, in some unaccountable way, with the reappearance of those fairy lights, or corpse-candles, which in olden time used kindly to foretell a shipwreck, or some other casualty.'

'I do not like the revival of such stories,' said Charles; 'they were too prevalent in our nursery days, though not without cause; for ships were then lost more frequently than now, being wrecked sometimes even in moderate weather. God grant that our shores remain unvisited by those dreadful catastrophes, which are not always the effect of accident—corpse-candles and wreckers being synonymous terms in my mind.'

'How do you account for corpse-candles? What are they?' inquired Clotilde.

'Those with which I have any acquaintance are, in reality, nothing more than a composition of dry straw, pitch, and rope; of which material my father found a quantity in these caverns, when by his exertions a search was instituted for shipwrecked property. In imagination, corpse-candles are a mysterious, unnatural light, which if seen by one solitary individual, foretells to that individual the approach of evil—perhaps of death. If more than one person is thus warned, corpse-candles presage a public or general calamity. When appearing on such a coast as this, they are called wreckers, because they deceive vessels to their destruction. In less civilised times than the present, or rather when the excise, or preventive service was not so rigidly sustained, some savages in the form of men were suspected of manufacturing such lights, and from thence arises the term wrecker. I am sorry that such disgraceful stories should be revived, and must make inquiry, as my father did, which checked them at the time. Meanwhile, the sultry air is equally deceptive. We have already outstayed our usual dinner-hour, and there will be no cloudless moon to guide us through the mazes of the park.'

'Stay but a few moments,' entreated Clotilde; 'the stars will be out, and as these clouds appear to fly, they must soon leave a clearer track for the moon.'

'We shall see no stars to night,' said Charles; 'the sky is overcast, and the clouds collect still faster than the moon escapes them. Come, it is dark already; we scarcely distinguish between the shore and the sea.'

While he spoke, I observed something to move upon the very summit of the cliffs. It was a human form, rendered just perceptible by a luminous background of moon-lit clouds. Next moment it seemed to sink into the earth; and while I kept my eyes fixed upon the spot, a scream from Clotilde, and a cry of

'Corpse-candles!' directed our attention to where she pointed, when from the mouth of the cavern, near the top of the cliff, there certainly did gleam a bright but momentary flame.

'Your scream has exorcised the evil spirit, my dear Clotilde,' said Charles.

'No; it is there again, like a blazing candle in a cottage window! Do you not see it? Ah! it has disappeared!'

'It is more like a dark-lantern,' returned her husband; 'probably carried by some person who is looking for rock birds, or their eggs. Wait you here a moment; I should like to ascertain the fact. You will not fear to wait without my protection for a moment.'

'Oh! do not meddle with such things!' she cried: 'you know not what that light may be—smugglers, or worse than smugglers may hide in those caverns—indeed, dear Charles, we cannot let you leave us.'

It was by this time impossible for him to leave us. One flash of vivid lightning was quickly followed by another; and then we heard a distant roll of thunder. Immediately the sky, the sea, the rocks, were all illuminated—the next instant involved in awful darkness; while frequent, and much nearer claps of thunder reverberating amongst the cliffs, were intermingled with the loud screaming of affrighted birds, and other demonstrations of an increasing storm.

My brother, now placing an arm round each of us, hastened toward home, much disappointed, I am sure, that he was prevented solving the mystery of the dark-lantern. There was as yet no rain; but the wind rose frightfully, and swept past us in tremendous gusts; so much so, that by the time we reached the park, its fury amongst the trees was not only deafening but dangerous. Showers of leaves came rushing into our faces, and some small branches broke upon our heads, threatening a heavier visitation. Happily our fatiguing walk was performed without personal injury; and soon as we reached home, two of the park-keepers were despatched to see that the life-boatmen were at their post, and others sent to try if the beacon could be lighted. These acts of humanity performed, my brother joined us at a late dinner; when, nearly exhausted with what he had gone through, and dreading what might follow, we thought much of that glorious fleet riding (to all appearance) so securely in the golden light of

evening, as well as of the smaller craft, that, little dreaming of the threatened danger, careered so lately on the buoyant waves,

‘Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind’s sway,
That, hush’d in grim repose, expects his evening prey.’

It was late before we could bring ourselves to separate; for the wind and the rain, which by that time fell in torrents, continued without abatement—nor had the lightning ceased. Rendered unusually nervous, I listened, with beating heart and shivering frame, to the wild guests that groaned without; and it was a welcome relief when William’s nurse came to entreat that I would allow her to bring the child and place him in my bed. ‘For the storm rages so at our side of the house,’ she added, ‘that I dread to remain in the nursery.’

Most willingly was her request complied with; and, having put the child into bed, I invited her to sit down in the same sheltered corner which served as my retreat. But, though terrified by the storm, she could not refrain from watching it, or from trying to catch a view of the sea, even when the darkness was relieved—if that may be called relief which heightens terror—by vivid flashes of electric fire, darting at intervals from behind a mass of clouds, and lighting up the most terrific features of the night.

Neither of us went to bed, for the fury of the tempest did not abate until daybreak; and then our impatience to learn what might have occurred in the night entirely banished sleep.

At the first opening of the dawn, Charles with several servants were seen to quit the house, and proceed directly toward the shore; but before they reached that fatal spot, hundreds of persons of all ages and sexes were pouring thither from every direction within many miles; impelled, as their conduct lamentably proved, rather by avarice than humanity; while the scene he witnessed was enough to appal the most insensible.

Stranded amongst those very rocks, over which he had so lately passed in all security, there lay the ruins of a noble vessel. The waves, though retreating, still covered the resistless hulk at intervals with sheets of foam, perfecting their work of annihilation, while fragments of her once compacted strength—masts, planks, and rigging—were tossed about, the sport of that triumphant element which she had so lately and so proudly ruled.

There had been an awful sacrifice of life, and many dead bodies were already washed on land; but the heartless multitude,

totally regardless of so sad a spectacle, were eagerly occupied in securing every one his share of the immense cargo which absolutely strewed the sands; rolling forward casks of wine, carrying huge bales of merchandise, and knocking off the lids of chests, too heavy to be speedily removed. Even carts, with their horses and drivers, were waiting to convey away the spoil, as if appropriation of everything belonging to the unfortunate ship was a lawful privilege. Nor was it without incurring opposition and insult that Sir Charles, assisted by a few of his own people, could prevent the loading of these carts—men, women, and children, all upholding each other in the process of depredation, without casting one thought toward the uncertainty of possession, or letting the awful scene before them interfere with their cupidity.

A very few of the crew had been saved, and those (in no condition to watch over the scattered property) were immediately carried to the village, no one being more active in their rescue and preservation than the Roman Catholic Priest: who, assisted by his landlord, the post-master, was amongst the busy crowd, marshalling, directing, and mingling in the toil of the hour. Indeed, so disinterested and humane was the conduct of both, that Charles forgot the recent insolence of the one, and some evil reports lately afloat of the other, while witnessing their meritorious zeal. But his attention was drawn especially toward a poor woman, who, amid many heartless spectators, was the only person with sufficient feeling to collect what covering she could find, and shield from public gaze some wretched corpses.

He stopped to notice a work of charity so worthy of approval, and to encourage a more general imitation, just at the moment that her son, a bold and active boy, having clambered across the rocks, and nearly reached the wreck, came running back with childish exultation, holding a silver watch in one hand and a small leathern purse in the other, both of which he threw to his mother. But instead of praising his courage, or appropriating the prizes, she flung them back upon the wave, exclaiming in a voice of terror: 'Touch them not, Johnny! they are the price of blood!'

'Oh, Sir! who would rob the murdered? Who would do the bidding of the evil one? Who would "take of the accursed thing and doom his soul?"'

'You are right, my good woman,' observed Charles, elevating

his voice. 'It is robbery—it is in every sense a direct infringement of the laws to touch one article belonging to a wreck, unless with the intent of restoration. But why speak of murder? Why fling away the property saved by your child, and not deliver it into safe keeping of the officers? These stiffened corpses show no sign of violence, except such bruises as the manner of their death accounts for.'

'O! I don't say that it is all on't murder—such murder (your honor) as might happen to any of us here on land! But the wreckers—the devil's watch-fires—they were seen last night, my own eyes saw them, I was waiting up for the boat; and David saw them too. He, blessed be God! knows what they mean of old, and kept the right side of the head-land. It is useless—quite useless to cope with such a power.'

By this time a number of curious listeners, attracted by the vehemence of the speaker, collected round her, amongst the rest Mac Cardwell, who, overhearing the last sentence, rebuked her in the overbearing yet familiar manner peculiar to him when addressing his inferiors.

'Hush, woman! Hold your idle raving. Fitter for you to go home and do something for the poor sufferers, whom I have been removing, than to be keening here for the dead that's past cure. Fitter for you to try and save some of the property, than to fling it back into the sea. Fitter for you, a great deal, to move some of these things scattered about, before the tide comes in and sweeps them all off, than to be standing here doing nothing but distracting people with your lies about watch-fires, and taking the devil's name in vain, you simple fool! Ah, Sir Charles! is that you come at last? We've had a hard night of it, I promise you! Doughty, my landlord, has been up and doing like myself. We've saved full a dozen lives. It requires to have all one's eyes about them, as mine were this morning before I could see. These Cornish fishermen and seaside people are monsters in human shape; they no more mind robbing a wreck than plucking a blackberry!'

So saying, he strode away; while my brother collected what help he could to assist the constables in gathering up the scattered property that still strewed the shore; securing it in the lawful dépôt, and seeing that the necessary duties of humanity were extended to the dead.

About noon he returned to us, accompanied by some neighboring gentlemen; and we then heard that the cargo, though apparently so large, offered no great temptation for theft, there being no portable articles of value, such as shawls, rich silks, precious stones, or specie,—nothing, in short, washed on shore but large bales of wool, and some casks of wine, which were being removed to the station-house.

Dr. Bentley, occupied all day in his melancholy duties to the dead, or in affording consolation to the living, called on us at tea-time, just as one of the keepers brought, or rather dragged, a poor tawny boy into the servant's hall. This half-naked object, uttering some strange sounds unintelligible to his hearers, and crouching to the ground, shrank with expressive actions of terror from all who ventured to approach him.

He was a native Indian, and though famishing with hunger, could not be tempted to eat until my brother, who spoke a little Hindostanee, succeeded in convincing him that no injury was meant. He then swallowed some food most voraciously, and feeling invigorated by the seasonable refreshment, looked upon us all with less distrust. But nothing could induce him to change his clothes, go to bed, or quit his place of refuge beside Charles, who succeeded at length in comprehending his story, and the principal cause of his terror. Under all the disadvantages of an imperfect translation, that pitiable story filled us with indignation, and multiplied fourfold our interest for the narrator.

● He was coming from India in attendance on a French lady, the wife of a merchant at Madras—on her way, poor soul, to visit her friends for a year, and place her little girl at school. There were other domestics of the party, but he knew nothing of their fate. When the ship struck; his lady, in agonies of fear, placed her little daughter in his arms, knowing he could swim, and charged him, let what might befall, never to let go the child, for whose further security she attached to his waist a silk pocket handkerchief, binding it also round the arm of her infant. To her own neck she fastened a rich casket, containing several articles of value. And no sooner was this done, than another shock precipitated all three into the sea, Juba's skill as a swimmer only preventing their instant annihilation. Thrown first against one rock, then against another, their lives were every moment in

danger. And the weight of the child tied so tightly to his waist, proved a serious impediment to the exertions of Juba. Still he continued to keep above water, sustaining his lady as well as her infant, the tide driving them nearer and nearer to shore. Vivid flashes of lightning at intervals illuminating the reef, they contrived at length to reach it, and to secure, after several efforts, a tenable position, where their only chance of life depended on the reflux of the waters, or of the abating of the storm before they should expire from cold.

Between the reef and the land there ran a tremendous current. Day did not break, but the lightning continued, flashing wildly and vividly over that cauldron of destruction. By these flashes they could discern some persons on the wreck, but the darkness came again, and these disappeared. A few lights were next seen to move about on land, and despite the death and desolation of that infuriated scene, hopes of life still sustained them to cling to the chances of preservation.

At length they imagined that the waves were receding, and something like a candle seemed to swim on the water. Presently there appeared the head of a man. And shouting aloud they hailed his approach. He came nearer and nearer: his arms were visible. The lady screamed with joy, and the poor Indian boy, watching the progress of their imagined deliverer, prepared, by untying the handkerchief, to throw him the child, whom it was his first impulse to save. But the wretch, more intent on spolia-tion than mercy, made a dart at the casket, which, inlaid with gold, shone much too conspicuously in the blaze of his lantern. Its unfortunate owner, already paralysed with cold, and shaken by the violent grasp thus made at her treasure, fell with a cry from her perilous footing, and Juba, who saw her faint struggle with the current, forgetting in his fright that he had loosened the child, threw himself forward in order to save her. But his generous purpose was of no avail, for at that instant a violent blow laid him stunned on the rock. When he recovered, the scene was a blank one. The lady, and robber, and his little charge were gone; but he cast himself into the foam of the waves, and paddling about, at length found the body of the infant. It was lifeless, indeed, yet he swam with it to the shore, held it to his bosom, and blew his breath on the face. But cold as an icicle, and perfectly stiff, he felt within himself that all was now over,

and gladly, most gladly would he have rushed upon death, but that—as he said—the corpse was in his care.

Creeping along to what seemed high head-land, he gained a smooth sandy path immediately beneath, and, without being discovered, reached an opening in the cliff, which, upon entering, proved to be a deep cave. Into this he penetrated, bearing his lifeless burden. The tide had, by that time, receded some way, and a magnificent sunrise was beginning to enlighten the country. There were number of persons running to and fro, a still greater number far out on the sands; for, with the reflux of the tide and the coming on of day, the storm had abated. But Juba could not bear to contemplate so altered a scene. He knew that his lady was engulfed in the waves, and rushing into the deepest recess of his rocky retreat, he placed the dead body of her child on the ground, flung himself over it, and wept without control.

About an hour, according to the best of his calculation, must have passed in this way, when some person carrying a light came into the cave. But who can imagine the terror of the unfortunate boy, when, in the ferocious countenance of him who bore it, he recognised the same person that had glared on him from the reef? Fortunately he remained in his corner, unseen. The robber, evidently in search of a hiding-place, found one at last. He took from beneath his coat the well-known casket, which he wrapped in a handkerchief and carefully concealed. Presently a second person cautiously crept into the cavern, and clapping his hand on the shoulder of the first, seemed, by his authoritative gestures, to claim a right of seeing the booty, which, after some remonstrance on the part of its present owner, was taken down, and carefully examined.

The examination appeared equally pleasing to both, although neither could succeed in opening the casket; but the weight of its contents, and the beauty of the outside, brought smiles of exultation upon their two villanous faces. Juba saw this distinctly as the lamp was held up. The countenance of the murderer made, of course, the most frightful impression; but he had a second opportunity of remarking the other, who, in less than an hour afterwards, returned alone, and indulged himself with a much longer survey of the hidden treasure. He even used some exertion to open it; but hearing a noise near the entrance of the cave, hastily

extinguished his lantern, and soon after groped his way cautiously out.

Thinking of the drowned lady, and her probable destroyer, the miserable boy again threw himself on the ground, and clasping the dead body of the child, felt that there was nothing left for him but to lie still, and die. Death does not, however, yield relief to its suppliants so easily. The pains of hunger and thirst became excruciatingly severe. His head ached to distraction. His clothes were saturated with wet. His limbs were bruised and stiff. Weary of weeping, he raised himself up, and stole softly into the mouth of the cave. It seemed mid-day. There was a bright warm sun which shone on him, while he shivered with cold. The hulk of the vessel lay above water. He yearned to reach her, but was deterred by the fear of discovery; instinct suggesting that, in a rencontre with the assaulter of his unhappy lady, there would be no safety for the witness of that inhuman act.

The claims of nature were not, however, to be resisted. And venturing up the breast of the cliffs, he climbed the park palings, in hopes of finding something wherewith to satisfy his hunger. A blackberry bush proved the only supply; and having eaten all that was eatable of its scarcely ripe fruit, he stretched himself in a thicket, and fell fast asleep. It was in this spot, about twilight, that a setting-dog betrayed him to the keeper.

Such was the painful recital of the poor boy to Sir Charles; who promised at once to take him under his protection, when Juba, throwing himself at my brother's feet, implored leave to revisit the cavern. Charles, understanding his motives, instantly complied; and sent some men with a litter for the conveyance of the corpse, which was found, as Juba had left it, in an unmolested corner. But though the strictest search was instituted, there were no tidings of the casket. It must have been removed. Nor was there any evidence of spoil to be found, except a fine Trichinopoly chain, which Juba affirmed to have sometime seen round the neck of his unhappy lady, and which he transferred to the safe keeping of my brother—a silent but, too-convincing witness of her cruel fate.

The influx of the tide presented a melancholy spectacle, for the sea gave up its dead, and the living looked mournfully on. The body of the merchant's wife was the last washed on shore; and Charles, with his usual good feeling, had it brought to the house,

and placed in the same chamber with her daughter's remains. Nothing could be more touching than the extreme affliction of Juba, who never quitted his agonizing post until the two bodies were borne to the church-yard, where, throwing himself upon their grave, he rent the air with his lamentations.

The few survivors of the wreck recognised their fellow-voyager, though all disclaimed an interest in his future provision; and as nothing remained for the poor houseless stranger but that Pendyffryn should become his asylum, my brother cheerfully accorded him a home.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEITHER hearing nor seeing more of the Confessor for two or three days, we naturally concluded that he was gone; and Charles arrogated no small credit to himself for the summary manner in which he believed that he had got rid of an incubus. Tranquillity was restored; our removal from home not referred to; and Clotilde, who, in consequence of her fatiguing walk in the storm and all the afflicting results, had suffered, for a few days, from a feverish cold, was recovering both her health and her spirits.

I found her one morning considerably better, although still confined to her dressing-room. She was opening a packet just brought her from Paris. Alas! its contents overwhelmed her with sorrow. The superior of her convent, her beloved *gouvernante*, was dead; and Clotilde, whose feelings were as grateful as acute, yielded unresistingly to her sorrow. It would have been in vain to attempt consolation at such a moment, and I was therefore obliged to let grief take its course; but Charles presently coming in, we persuaded her to lie down, and, after some little time, to swallow an opiate. He sat by her couch most of the day; and toward evening, being exhausted with crying, she dropped into a tranquillised sleep,

Next morning, when she sent for me, I found her sitting up in bed, looking over some papers which had been forgotten in the agitation of yesterday.

'Come here, dearest Marie,' she said, as soon as I appeared. 'Come, and say that you will try to forgive me. I have been very wrong: I have yielded to unavailing despair, regardless of you, or of my husband. Here is a letter from the Père Montcalm. Oh, Marie! what a letter! How piously does he adjure me

to be submissive! How sweetly represent the departure of our friend! To act as a Christian, not to mourn as one without hope, is the advice of this respectable prêtre. Shall the child whom he has instructed disregard his precepts? No: my Confessor departs for Italy this afternoon. He goes on a mission from Ireland. I must arise and receive him. It is now twelve o'clock, and the conveyance by which he travels is to pass our gate. I am weak, Heaven knows! and very unequal to exertion; but he gives me until the last moment to prepare my despatches; and there is a sacred duty to perform, for which the munificence of my husband furnishes abundant means. We must pray for the soul of the departed. Oh, my dear sister! what a happiness for your Clotilde, that this mission had not taken place—that the Confessor had not gone before to-day. What an opportunity is thus miraculously presented of forwarding a slight token of her devotion—of her gratitude to Rome!

'What a golden opportunity,' I thought, 'of adding to the stores of the rapacious Mac Cardwell; and most willingly, had gold been at my disposal, would I have furnished a mass for the benefit of Madame la Gouvernante, to speed such a messenger on his ways.'

Having despatched a reply, appointing her Confessor to call, Clotilde arose, and in less than an hour was waiting his arrival in the chapel.

Rejoicing to learn the final destination of our tormentor, and that we should for a long time be freed from his interference, I descended to the library. I was rather in dread that Sir Charles might encounter the Priest either coming to, or on his egress from the house; for, after his summary expulsion from the premises but three days before, it was very doubtful how this new trespass might be treated. Dreading any fresh scene with the Confessor, especially under present circumstances, and desirous, above anything, that he should depart in peace, I was on the point of seeking Charles, to make known to him the pilgrimage to Rome, which was that day to be commenced, when, all heated and flurried, he rushed into the library, and inquired if Clotilde was still in her chamber.

'No,' I replied; 'she has been busy preparing a packet for Rome. Mac Cardwell leaves England for Italy this day, and is to call for it on his way.'

'Is to call!' he repeated, with a voice of angry scorn. 'I can tell you that he has called—that he is here. Yes; I perceived him stealing through the park at too great a distance to be overtaken, and too deaf to hear. But I had no idea that he would dare to enter my house—the house he was forbidden—covertly, secretly, like a thief in the night, until afterwards, meeting with Banks, he told me that he had seen him close by the flower-garden. I followed; he had let himself in—in by the private door. I pushed back the bolt and followed—not in time to arrest this privileged Priest—this authorized interloper—but to behold him open the window, and step into the chapel, no doubt by her appointment,—assuredly with her consent. What power arrested my just vengeance at that moment? What principle intervened to prevent his instant chastisement, but pity and consideration for his unfortunate dupe?

'These feelings,' continued my brother, 'did, thank Heaven! restrain me even at the moment of exquisite torture. There were persons within hearing; I commanded myself, and departed in silence. But the incendiary shall not escape—shall not go unpunished. Honor compels me to notice the insult—to chastise the insulter. Honor! O Mary! that mine—that Clotilde's should be so much as named in one breath with this man—this influential, domineering Jesuit. A few hours since, and she could not leave her room. But this Priest, this second Hohenloe, revives her by a charmed billet. She rises, as if by magic, and comes down stairs to keep her assignation!'

'Oh! do not use such a term,' I rather indignantly cried—'so unworthy of our innocent Clotilde, who believes every one as undesigning as herself. Mac Cardwell is on his way out of the country; in an hour he meets the London coach at your gate. His superstitious victim wishes to have masses performed for the soul of her lost friend; and his errand this morning is to receive her commands, with money of course, to effect this pious purpose at Rome. The comfort such an opportunity affords her is astonishing; but it is no less true. She would not have risen from her bed, except to perform what she conceives to be an imperative duty. One hour will rid us of the presence of her priestly adviser, I hope for ever. I beseech you let his departure be in peace. Clotilde tells me that he has some very influential friends on the continent, who are interested in retaining him there; do

not, therefore, at this last hour, after having borne so much, insult the feelings of your wife through the medium of her Confessor. She is always obedient—always affectionate—ever grateful to you.'

Charles, after revolving over what I had spoken for a minute, in a softened tone, replied: 'Perhaps so; but is she candid? Am I the depository of her thoughts? Have I her confidence? And what is affection, if it have its disguises? Where the sympathy is not perfect, it is not such as I value, as I looked for, and have a right to expect from my wife; as, indeed, I experienced until her acquaintance with this insidious man. Why should she, in concert with a comparative stranger, have reserves on any subject with her dearest friends; as if those friends were not worthy of her confidence? For instance, this mission to Rome; where was the necessity for making it a secret?'

I assured him that Clotilde knew nothing of the mission until the Confessor wrote to her that morning. He had, at times, intimated his hopes of being employed; but that, as respected his actual appointment, it had only been announced to her a few hours since.

'An appointment, most probably, concocted in the fellow's fertile brain, since my plain speaking to him on Thursday. A mission to Rome, is a more honorable sort of exit than a dismissal from me—more profitable too. Banks has had a pencilled note from his lady this morning, requiring the advance of her next half-year's pin-money. Poor soul! I suppose she imagines that those frequent demands on her purse are all essential to the safety of her salvation. How dreadful are the shadows cast over us by this Upas creed! Would to God, that, by asserting my authority, Clotilde might get a glimpse of heaven's sunshine, and I rid myself of its poisonous exhalations!'

Scarcely had he spoken, the door ajar in his hand, when Juba, the dark boy, rushing into the room, seized him by the arm, dragged him to an opposite window, and pointed to a copse-wood without—the very pupils of his eyes distending, and every limb trembling with passionate emotion. The few words he uttered, I, of course, could not understand; but they produced an effect upon my brother as violent as that by which he himself seemed to be overpowered.

The window opened upon the ground, and was on the same side

of the house as the chapel. Nor can I ever forget Charles's expression of countenance, as he threw up the sash, and bade me "Look to my sister, for that he was in pursuit of a villain."

"Not of her Confessor!" I cried; "not of Mac Cardwell, who is leaving the neighborhood at this moment. Oh, Charles!" and I clung to him with feverish energy, "have mercy!"

"I must think only of justice!" he exclaimed, impatiently, at the same time shaking me off. "I must attend to the accusation of this boy. I must bring to light the blackest hypocrisy, and check, as is my duty, the progress of crime!"

Saying thus, he sprang out of the window, followed by Juba; while an impulse I could not control compelled me to follow. Comprehending everything in that expression of my irritated brother, I recollected the situation of Clotilde, the delicate position in which she must be placed if her husband should arrest and prosecute the Priest. This afflicting recollection urged on my speed. I had but one hope—one resource only occurred to me: it was that of delaying Charles, and allowing time for the escape of the criminal. Could I but accomplish my brother's detention until the coach should pass the gate, all might be well: it wanted only a few minutes of the time when that public conveyance might be expected.

Charles and his guide rushed on at their full speed: they outwalked—they outran me. Still there was no sign of Mac Cardwell, and, despite my failing limbs, I persevered.

The park, though extensive, is throughout thickly wooded, in some parts almost impervious, and, therefore, afforded many places of concealment. Unless the Confessor were soon seen, his escape was quite possible; and, if he feared pursuit—if he had just reason to dread Juba's recognition—if matters stood with him as I apprehended, he would surely take one of the paths which were so likely to facilitate escape.

Charles presently slackened his pace, and looked anxiously round; while Juba ran wildly about. Doubling my speed, I came up with the former. He was in no mood to bear interference, and harshly commanded me home. Though nearly speechless with fright, I tried to expostulate; to urge the misery he might incidentally entail on Clotilde: but this injudicious suggestion added fuel to the fire.

"Return home to the house, girl!" he sternly cried, throw-

ing me from him. 'Meddle no more in what is my concern alone; and beware, both yourself and your misguided sister, how I see any one bearing the name of Trevillion take measures to screen an impostor!'

At this juncture, to my horror, I espied the long skirts of a clerical cloak: they were fluttering behind a grove of trees which ran parallel to the path whereon we stood. Juba saw them too: he uttered a yell of savage joy which resounded through the woods, and sprang forward, like a young tiger, to pounce upon his prey. Charles also darted on; but Mac Cardwell, warned by that cry, which he had too much reason to dread, plunged into the nearest thicket, and, while they beat about in their search, gained at the other side a much shorter path, and endeavoured to effect his object of reaching the gate. With an undefined hope of averting the impending mischief, I still kept my brother in view. Alas! it was only to witness a scene that I would have given my life to prevent.

The horn of the stage coach sounded from the high road: there was but one quarter of a mile to the place of appointment: in less than five minutes the vehicle must reach the gate: in less than five minutes Mac Cardwell would be off.

'To my delight the Priest, far ahead of his pursuers, nears the goal. He gains it! Alas! the gate was locked—I saw him from where I stood shake it with violence, and then dart toward the park paling. The paling was high, and difficult to climb; his foot slipped, and he fell. This misadventure caused a delay, and Charles with one bound was on the spot, and seized him as he arose. I could see that they fiercely struggled, that he regained his feet, and that Juba, springing forward, fastened on his cloak. There followed an exclamation of horror. I heard the latter cry for help, but I remember no more. Indeed, I saw and heard no more; my senses tottered, the ground gave way beneath me, my knees lost their strength, my path was indistinct. Earth, sea, and sky soon commingled in one mass of darkness, and the last thing I can call to mind was a chill sensation stealing over my sight.

No one discovered me, though I lay there for a length of time. When my recollection returned, and that I was able to move, neither Sir Charles, nor the Priest, nor any human being was in sight; and with what strength I could command I hurried to the house.

CHAPTER IX.

IN the solitude of my own chamber I endeavoured to recover the composure with which it was necessary to appear before Clotilde. But, nervous with anxiety, I could not withdraw from the window. Charles, however, did not make his appearance, and, whilst in a state of agitation by no means subdued, I was unexpectedly joined by that gentle being whose observation it was so much my wish to avoid, and who, though still pale and languid, wore an expression of countenance so sweet, and so tranquillised, that, as she approached me, tears unbidden rushed to my eyes.

‘Why these tears?’ she inquired, laying her hand affectionately on my arm. ‘I am, alas! the cause of your inquietude. But it shall be so no more: regrets which belong to me alone shall no more interfere with our comforts. I owe much to the blessed advice, the pious councils, of the Père Montcalm; he has led me to the source of never-failing consolation; he points out the benefit as well as the necessity of awaking out of self, and attending to the social duties which love and gratitude enforce. Weep not thus, therefore, dear sister: you are cold, and you are trembling. Ah! what have I not to answer for in thus afflicting so kind a heart!’

‘I could make no other reply than by returning her embrace, and endeavouring to dry my tears. But the effort did not succeed; for her amiable intentions, the soft accents in which they were conveyed, with the terrible disclosure that I knew to be at hand, completely overcame my courage.

‘You must lie down presently,’ resumed my dear sister, in soothing accents; ‘your young heart has been severely touched, and I have forgotten that the dreadful scenes of the 1st

three days must have been as trying to your feelings as to mine. Yes; you shall take some repose, and I will sit by and watch you, till repose does its duty.'

'As an excuse to avoid conversation, her remedy might have been of some utility, but my uneasiness about Charles rendered it useless, and, attributing my nervous condition to the events of the last few days, I preferred joining her in her dressing-room. Thither we accordingly repaired, and reclining on a sofa, I allowed her to talk on, though I scarcely heard a word she said, or gave any heed to the kind exertions she was making for my amusement. My whole soul was occupied in listening for my brother's return. At length I heard his well known tread in the vestibule, while the voice of Juba, loud and exulting, struck conviction—if conviction were wanting—to my heart.

'That is Charles,' observed Clotilde; 'shall we join him below, or shall I invite him to come to us here?'

But I insisted upon going to Charles alone, and, after some resistance, gained my point. He was in his study, with saddened brow, and looks expressive of painful anxiety. I gathered, ere long, that the person implicated by Juba as the murderer of his lady, was Doughty, the post-master. The Priest he identified as him who had entered the cavern, and who seemed so interested as regarded the casket; but no more. Nothing could be clearer than the testimony of the Indian boy. The accused parties were committed for trial.

Perfectly in keeping with the high moral character of Lady Trevillion, was her conduct when the whole was made known. However shocked at the arrest of her Confessor, she acknowledged that Charles had done his duty; and never, since the first time of their married life, did I hear him express a higher admiration of her mind and principles than on this trying occasion.

But, notwithstanding the justness of her own natural impulses, she was far from adhering to them consistently. Clotilde was no free agent; and as the day of trial drew on, she passed most days in the chapel, performing acts of penance and humiliation. While, instead of commiserating the desolate stranger, I have seen her recoil from the sight of Juba, as she would from that of some venomous reptile.

From the day of arrest till the hour of trial, there was nothing connected with the late awful catastrophe, which caused such a sensation as Juba's accusation of the Priest. An interpreter from Falmouth had taken down his depositions; but, though they agreed word for word with his first agitated statements, people remained incredulous, and a universal opinion maintained amongst the partisans of Doughty, as also on the minds of his own party, that the Priest and the post-master would be acquitted. Previous to the trial, every subordinate witness for the prosecution disappeared, while one of the most popular pleaders was engaged for the defence.

It seemed as if money were at command for every purpose; and never had the Priest made himself so popular. But we shall not attempt any particulars of the trial. Suffice to say, that Juba's evidence was clearly given, and clearly interpreted; and his tears for the death of the child—his struggle to keep down passion, when describing the efforts of the mother to retain possession of the treasure which cost her her life—and lastly, the manner in which he stood up, and, pointing to Mac Cardwell and the post-master, identifying them as the parties accused—might have convinced the most sceptical of his truth.

But, though Sir Charles and Banks corroborated the testimony of the boy by their account of his discovery in the thickets at Pendyffryn; though my brother and Captain Monson had directly visited the cavern, and found the dead body of the child as described—there could no witness be found that either the Confessor or Doughty had been seen near the cavern; and as to the time and place of the Lady's being drowned, an *alibi* was proved for the post-master, who found friends to prove that he was in a far distant part of the shore, trying to get out a life-boat, which evidence set aside that of the stranger. As to Mac Cardwell, he refused to be sworn or answer a question—claiming the privilege of his sacred profession—and was most eloquently supported by the popular pleader, so brilliant in his defence, and so well versed in his art of 'making the worse appear reason.' While the splendid orator thus held forth, the foreigner, not insensible to the graces of pantomime, clapped his hands with the rest, in admiration of him whom he believed to be the champion of justice.

Even this little incident was turned to account. It was, to

use the words of the popular pleader, 'A beam of orient light emanating from the demon of darkness.'

The jury withdrew, and, after an hour's consultation, came back to say that eleven of their number considered the evidence of Juba insufficient; but that the twelfth, who witnessed the arrest of the accused, could not be supposed to be perfectly unbiassed — a verdict was instantly pronounced for the prosecuted, who, according to popular reading, were most honorably acquitted.

But Doughty had no great reason, after all, to congratulate himself. My brother, Captain Monson, and others, protested against the privilege claimed by the Priest; and demurred to his asserted right of refusing to give evidence, on the plea of preserving inviolate the secrets of the confessional.

Doughty was, therefore, detained until an appeal could be made elsewhere; and the bail of Mac Cardwell was not released. He was ordered to hold himself in readiness, should he be called upon again.

CHAPTER X.

IF Clotilde was relieved by the escape from justice of a person whose reputed crime compromised the character of a minister of her church, and in whose condemnation he might have been implicated, she was, on the other hand, not a little distressed by the detention of Mac Cardwell, and felt alarmed at her husband's having been the means of delaying a mission to the holy Catholic city.

Mac Cardwell, it soon appeared, experienced the same fears on his own account, that Lady Trevillion did for the safety of her husband; and, not feeling bound by English law as he was by Romish authority, he forfeited his securities, which had not been taken off, and proceeded forthwith on his mission, leaving a letter for Sir Charles, stating that, in his opinion, the important transaction in which he was spiritually engaged, absolved him from attendance to secular matters.

'For myself,' continued the writer, 'no aristocratic influence, however exerted, shall compel any violation of confessional faith, which is one means of salvation to sinners. Not that you are to infer from what has transpired that the prisoner at the bar would have been compromised by my answers; or that, although a Catholic, he had made any confession of the crime imputed to him. My conduct on the late occasion had no peculiar reference to the post-master. I was solely influenced in maintaining the dignity of my church, and in preserving inviolate the privileges of my religion. I desired, in the most public manner, to demonstrate that a Catholic minister has power to withhold his testimony; and that the law of the land cannot reach at any confidence which the contrite sinner, however guilty, either of previous act or of intention, may in any place,

or on any occasion, pour forth in the ears of his minister. Confession remits him here and hereafter: he is thenceforth, in the sight of Heaven, a justified penitent. But how Sir Charles Trevillion is to be absolved for his persecution of a stranger, whose spiritual duties detained him in his neighborhood, is best known to himself. It "may not be discovered here," but "will be shown hereafter." I leave you, sir, with the impression on my mind, that by the strict performance of my duty to my church, I have incurred your dislike, and subjected myself to personal insult at your hands; but I make no complaint—I call for no redress. I do not write a line to Lady Trevillion; she suffers enough, poor lady, in every sense, without my making her a party to your suspicion, and involving her in your hatred of her spiritual instructor.'

Such was Mac Cardwell's farewell to Pandyffryn; and sincerely did I rejoice at his departure. My brother, however, was disappointed and provoked at his escape, since it necessitated the liberation of Doughty, whose detention did not last beyond the next quarter sessions.

A few weeks' time to reflect, together with the flight of the Priest, changed the opinions of many; so that when Doughty came out of prison, he found himself but coldly received; and having lost the post-office, he soon followed the example of his old inmate, and turned his back upon Cornwall.

Poor Juba, whose unsophisticated good sense was shocked at the liberation of two such merciless scoundrels, looked doubtfully on every one, and moved about amongst us in apparent fear of his life. Charles, therefore, shortly after inquired for a vessel bound to Madras, and had him taken to Falmouth, and placed on board, with recommendatory letters to his master, couched in the warmest terms.

Clotilde, who had been the greatest sufferer in all the late events, after the dispersion of Mac Cardwell, Doughty, and Juba, gradually recovered her serenity. We interested ourselves in our former occupations, and again united our different talents and tastes in furnishing and ornamenting the house. This interesting disposal of our time was peculiarly suited to Clotilde; she pursued her occupation with spirit, and the results of her chaste and exquisite fancy were truly admirable. It seemed as if the removal of the superstitious tyrant had taken off an embargo

from her natural animation and delight in making herself useful. She was no longer restrained, solitary, and abstracted; harmony was restored to our school, cheerfulness to our domestic circle; and by the time that our long-expected friends arrived at Pendyffryn, its charming mistress was once more the same attractive being, who, before she was subjugated to the influence of intolerance, had diffused universal pleasure, and ensured universal love.

I had been long aware, that some of our friends were coming to see us, more out of compliment to Charles as the representative of his family, than in approbation of his marriage. Nor could their approbation be expected. They did, however, come, but prejudice gave way in the presence of Clotilde. 'Tis but for a few days,' said Mrs. Trevillion—our very primitive maiden Aunt—to me. 'Nor should my stay be even for that time, except in respect to my nephew himself, and to support you under your trying circumstances.'

But the old lady could not resist the sweet gentle attentions of her hostess; and the family party who came to disapprove, went away in far different tempers. Indeed, so much was Mrs. Theresa Trevillion conciliated, that the visit on her part was lengthened some days; and when parting, she actually invited us to Bath.

'We will accept her hospitality,' said Charles, as her carriage drove from the door. 'Not quite to the extent of sleeping at her house, but we can hire one in the old lady's neighbourhood. I should so like a short sojourn there; and to show you, dear Clotilde, some of the beauties of England.'

We did go to Bath, and I know not which of our party was most pleased with their first impressions, as we approached that city of hills, on a clear evening in March, and saw it under all the glories of sunset. The lofty terraces of the new town rising, one above the other—their precipitous sites almost commingling with the clouds—the deep repose of the old city lying in the plain beneath, its time-darkened buildings, venerable abbey, soft flowing river, richly embellished *environs*, and hanging woods, forming a *coup d'œil*, not to be surpassed. A house had been prepared for us in these environs, situated on one of the beautiful acclivities which flanked the south banks of the Avon. As we slowly ascended to our destined rest, Bath was lost sight of for almost

twenty minutes; but when at length we reached it, and looked back upon the golden prospect, 'far sinking into splendour', nothing could exceed that scene in glory. From sky to earth it seemed as if there were suspended a thousand draperies of dazzling brilliancy; as if the very clouds were wreathed with lamps of fire; as if the Gothic windows of the dark cathedral, and every window in that dense and antique mass of which it forms the centre, were suddenly touched by the enchanter's wand, and blazed 'an illumination of all gems.' No one, who has not witnessed the gorgeous spectacle, can possibly imagine the magnificent effect of such an appearance, or conceive the unique admiration which attends the closing in of evening, when evening closes in on Bath.

Expectation was no way disappointed upon a nearer survey of what had dazzled us so much at first; and having satisfied curiosity by climbing the elevations of the new town, and by acquainting ourselves with the antiquities of the old, we next turned our steps toward the country, where the healthful downs invited us to vigorous exercise, the sheltered valleys (and where such valleys?) to explore their varied intersections, their cheerful, but retiring loveliness—the most remote and last discovered being, in our estimation, always the best worth research. Happy and tranquil scenes! 'too bright and fair even for remembrance', gaining so much in contrast with anxieties already gone through, so much more on retrospection with misery since experienced—would that I could forget ye!

But our ostensible reason for a sojourn in Bath being to visit Mrs. Letitia Trevillion, I must not omit to mention how graciously she received us, or how solicitous she was to show off her nephew and his accomplished wife; of whom—despite those drawbacks, her religion and foreign birth—the old lady was not a little vain; and who, had she valued admiration more than duty, might have had Mrs. Letitia's world at her feet. But the rooms and the parades, the concerts and balls, formed no part of Clotilde's enjoyment, while the season of Lent forbade her participating in such gaieties; and while, added to the gratification of sharing in the excitements of Roman Catholic worship, she had the peculiar pleasure of meeting with a Confessor personally known to the Père Montcalm, and introduced to her acquaintance by that reverend prelate.

Mr. Austin was one of those persons whose first appearance excites in the beholder a remarkable interest. Extreme reserve seemed his peculiar characteristic; yet, while he shrank from, rather than invited attention, attention was sure to fix itself upon him. His figure, tall, slight, and rather attenuated; his dress, deportment, the very expression of his dark, deep-set, saintly eyes, all were evangelical. It was impossible to look upon him without respect, or to hear him without deference. But it would be as impossible to transfer to the canvass every hue of the changeful chameleon, as to read in one sitting, or indeed in one thousand, the character of his mind in his countenance; so much did the latter vary according to the subject on which he spoke, the person whom he addressed, or the situation in which he was placed. Not that such variations were the effects of natural susceptibility, or were beyond his control: I have discovered, upon longer acquaintance, that all were, or could be assumed.

The introductory visits of this accomplished Confessor were short and well-timed. He spoke little himself; gave the lead to my sister or to myself; encouraged us to be communicative; said just enough to create a desire that he should say a great deal more; and always contrived to break off at the precise moment when conversation had attained its highest promise of perfection, leaving an interest in his departure like that we feel in the progress of some unfinished painting, which betrays the master's hand, and to which expectation looks impatiently for touches of still superior beauty.

In short, Mr. Austin appeared as if purposely created to fill up the measure of Clotilde's happiness—to supply her only want: for though abounding in every good, unmolested in her religious privileges, possessing the entire love of a husband, to whom she was herself devoted, with the esteem of his relations, and the power of exercising an extensive benevolence, she yearned for something more. Her views of higher things emanating from natural religion, were 'seen through a glass, darkly'. In the clearness of her fine understanding she knew that all was not right—that mystification surrounded her; and when left alone to the unbiassed use of that understanding, her perplexities increased. She desired a freer means of approach to Him, whose call was so loud, and whom it was so difficult to resist. She felt an earnest wish to pour out the gratitude of her heart at

the footstool of the Most Merciful; yet she arose from that footstool with a void in her soul—with feelings unsatisfied—with a longing for something unpossessed. It was for the blessing of a purer light that she yearned: for unreserved communion, not only with her God, but with her dearest friends. This she knew not how to obtain, nor where, in her isolated state, to apply. Dare she pour out these oppressed feelings on the bosom of her husband, he was certain to afford her his sympathy; and much did she wish, that, without sin, she could receive such sympathy. But fidelity to her religion, the dread of being influenced by mortal love to hazard immortality—of being led away by such dear influence, to reject a faith on which her salvation rested, locked up her heart. No wonder, then, that she should hail with joy the approach of a guide on whom it was safety to rely—who was chosen for her by the instructor of youth, and to whom she could refer under all perplexities. Looking upon him as a link between her and her salvation, no wonder if she felt relief from every care when introduced to Mr. Austin.

‘How often have I envied you your Doctor Bentley,’ she said to me, when her Confessor had concluded his second visit; ‘but I shall commit the sin of envy no longer; for now my advantages are equal. Oh, how much is due to the Père Montcalm, for giving me a preceptor so worthy of respect, whom I may, with so much pleasure, present to my husband! Already I perceive that he is exactly suited to Charles, that he blends in his manners the polish of foreign education with the natural gravity of an Englishman: the most fastidious need not fear encroachment from him. What an interposition of Heaven his being here at this time! Is not his appearance altogether saintly? Does he not look as if already canonized?’

‘He looks like a very gentlemanly person,’ I replied; ‘not in robust health, and therefore the more interesting. But I am not acquainted with him yet; for, though he manages so adroitly to draw us both out, scarcely one sentiment does he utter himself—at least, not one expressive of a feeling.’

‘Half-a-dozen words, Marie, are equal to a thousand, according to the person who utters them; and very few from the lips of Mr. Austin are enough to impress his hearers with confidence, veneration, and a certainty of excellence which satisfies the soul.

I must write, without delay, and thank the Père Montcalm for his affectionate care of the absent Clotilde.'

Mr. Austin was, in truth, so very prepossessing, gentle, and retiring, that I, too, might have been as enthusiastic as herself, if Clotilde, in addressing him, had not used the term 'Father'; but the utterance of that sacred name—through which we claim an heritage in heaven, which is our dearest privilege on earth—which implies, either in its moral or spiritual sense, so much of dependence, obligation, and love—dissolved the charm; and when the Confessor admitted the relationship, by calling her in turn, 'My Daughter', the film dropped wholly from my eyes, and he was invested with danger and dissimulation. The affected humility of the man was contrasted with the boundless authority of the Priest, and the confidence, which so mild an exterior might otherwise have secured, was changed into the pains of suspicion.

I little liked to hear her use a name so hallowed, though, in reference to the Père Montcalm, that venerable instructor of her childhood, it had been softened by a foreign idiom; but, when applied to one with whom she had but a few hours' acquaintance, who, but for a peculiar seriousness of deportment, a slightly attenuated figure, and the pale olive of his complexion, would have looked younger than her husband, it sounded in my ears unbecoming, almost sacrilegious. And this consideration, as I said before, recalling to mind the authority of Mr. Austin's position, with all its dangerous concomitants, changed the pleasure which might have been derived from society so attractive, into apprehension of the consequences.

It was on the occasion of his second visit that Mr. Austin met my brother at the door. They exchanged no more than a bow: but none knew better than the Confessor how to throw the most meaning into the most simple of his actions; and Charles, who merely touched his hat, was impressed by the respectful and dignified acknowledgment which he received in return.

'Well, dearest!' cried Clotilde, running to meet him as he entered the drawing-room, 'you have seen Mr. Austin?'

'I have; and, if a little more aged, think he would look very apostolic.'

'Oh, he is the most interesting-looking person in the world!—

so dignified, so retiring, yet so very much accomplished. His manners and conversation would delight you.'

Few persons like to hear those whom they exclusively love, make another the subject of excessive praise. Nor was Charles quite exempt from human failing in this respect; and Clotilde unfortunately, though possessed of good taste, and not without tact, let the feelings of the moment throw her off her guard. She spoke, when excited to approbation, like a French-woman, in superlatives. Her English, though correct, was not original; she thought in her own native tongue, and the transcript of her thoughts, or rather their translation, sounded sometimes too florid. Charles was thoroughly English in every feeling, thought, and practice; his expressions, like his actions, were correct and well governed. It was impossible to know her without admiration and love, or him without respect and esteem. Had it not been for the intervention of a third influence, these two opposite characters, each so amiable in its way, and each so sensible of the merits of the other, might, blended together by the softening cement of connubial affection, have formed a rare union of domestic virtue and of foreign grace. But, alas! that third, that fatal influence!

I must not, however, anticipate.

One morning, returning from a walk, we met Mr. Austin slowly ascending the hill. His step was languid, and his appearance that of a person who has gone through recent fatigue, both of body and mind; without waiting for permission, Clotilde introduced him to her husband. A few words only passed. She inquired with interest after his health; he merely replied by saying, that his walk had been tiresome; then he recurred to the beauty of the day, the scenery, etc. etc., bowed low, but with a reservation of dignity peculiar to himself, and was the first to move away.

'Mr. Austin has been performing some painful duties, I am sure,' remarked Clotilde. 'I hear from others that he is indefatigable amongst the poor; but he never boasts of his works, or complains of the weight of his labors.'

'He is certainly, for a stranger, a very attractive person,' returned Charles; 'though not, as Clotilde expressed herself, "the most interesting person in the world."'

'My sister,' I said, 'speaks with equal warmth of all whom

she approves. You know, Clotilde, I laughed the other day when you used the same expression to our old friend Doctor Bentley.'

'It would be impossible,' she replied, 'not to speak of him except with approbation—with warm approbation; I cannot learn to deliver myself with cold praise of those whom I so highly esteem.'

'If praise were always proportioned to merit,' observed Charles, 'you could not express yourself too highly of our excellent friend; but there cannot be two persons "the most interesting in the world."'

From this remark I could see that the exclusiveness of the above unfortunate phrase rested on my brother's mind; and yet the acquaintance thus unpropitiously begun, imperceptibly progressed.

Charles, naturally reserved, and with an intuitive horror of encroachment, seldom encouraged intimacies; and Mr. Austin, keenly observant of character, soon saw into his. He therefore held back, and, however desirous of our acquaintance, by his manner rather seemed to repel than invite civility. But the former was attached to botanical pursuits, and our new acquaintance, both a botanist and an horticulturist, possessed the rare talent of making his knowledge known without the slightest appearance of display. Sir Charles arose with the sun, and wandered far in search of specimens. Mr. Austin's habits were the same; cultivating a similar taste in a still higher degree, he possessed a magnificent herbal; which, without the slightest appearance of obtrusiveness, he offered to my brother. They met in their early researches, and it was natural that, attracted by the same occupation, they should sometimes pursue it together. Mr. Austin was invited, with his herbal, to join our family party when he could; and aware that his society was really wished for, he no longer declined, but rather met the cordiality. Nor did he hide his acquirements under the vale of reserve, but became a delightful as well as instructive companion. The study of the morning furnished conversation for the evening, and I am sure that Clotilde, entering with avidity into whatever drew her husband and the Confessor together, reckoned these evenings amongst the happiest of her life.

At once profound and comprehensive in his reading, and

full of literary information, it was not difficult for the Confessor to find subjects of various interest, without adverting to any upon which differences might arise. And in politics, though not in religion, he professed the same opinions as his host. If, however, it happened that a point was disputed, and that his superior knowledge upon that point gained him the advantage, he immediately and adroitly recurred to something else, asked a question, assumed the attitude of a listener, and the air of a person who devotes his whole attention where he knows that there is much to be gained. In short, seeming to receive, while in reality he imparted information, he made his way by the most acceptable species of flattery, under the semblance of the most amiable candor.

A respector of the laws, a lover of order, his morality was perfect—it was beautiful. Neither Fenelon, nor Blair, nor Priestley, need have been ashamed to profess it, either in language or sentiment. But so carefully for a time was religion kept out of sight, that it might have been the morality of the Jew or of the Turk, rather than of the Christian.

CHAPTER XI.

OUR sojourn at Bath being limited, we made few acquaintances except those in the immediate set of Mrs. Letitia; and when every thing worth seeing was inspected in the city, every walk, within walking distance, explored in the country, a certain number of dinners partaken of, Charles began to tire, and to wish for the occupations of home. There was, however, but one fortnight till Easter, and Clotilde prevailed upon him to remain for that period.

Mr. Austin continued to visit us, and, under the circumstances, formed a pleasing resource. Living rather out of town, we were consequently less liable to interruptions, or remarks to which a residence more on the *pavé*, might have subjected us.

There were now no penances—no unnecessary restrictions. Clotilde went regularly to prayers in the early part of the day, and returned home in cheerful spirits to take part in our occupations or amusements; we heard not a word of confessionals. Religion, as a subject of argument, was never mentioned between us; for Mr. Austin, cautiously suppressing every indication of zeal, prudently restrained his progress: and resting on preliminary steps, was too good a calculator not to be aware, that one is the first figure of a thousand. Nor did there seem, throughout that dreamy period, so far as appearances were carried on, any other distinction between Protestant and Catholic, than if we were all belonging to the same persuasion, or that Clotilde preferred cathedral service while we resorted to our parish church.

On the Thursday in Passion-week Mr. Austin at length broke the ice, by first alluding to a Romish practice particularly attended to that week. My sister had looked for a few days rather pale, and on her leaving the room, the Confessor, who was sitting with us !

inquired of me, if I thought her quite so well as usual, adding, 'I fear that her self-inflictions, in the way of fasts, are unnecessarily severe. I wish we could persuade her to be more careful of her health. Lady Trevillion is evidently delicate, and in such a case there are always allowances. I am not one of those who place entire trust upon injurious mortifications. On the contrary, I deprecate the weakening of the mental powers by overstraining the corporeal strength. A calm and collected performance of our sacred duties is, in my mind, more acceptable than either excitement or depression: such a performance requires the full use of the faculties, and it becomes us therefore to preserve their vigor, rather than to risk their defection. Some hardened hearts require bodily mortifications, but I am an enemy to all that enervates. Sir Charles, I hope,' he added, 'agrees with me in my view of abstinence.'

Charles did assuredly agree; and, as soon as he recovered from the surprise which so much candor was likely to cause, acknowledged his sentiments to be those of the Confessor: the rigid fasts practised by Lady Trevillion had always appeared to him, he said, works of supererogation built on self-righteousness. They gave him much uneasiness; and he thought, in her present state of health, they were calculated to be injurious both mentally and corporeally. He then expressed the pleasure he felt in meeting with a Roman Catholic clergyman whose opinions were so moderately and so candidly stated.

Religious conversation being thus broached, Mr. Austin, had he been one of ourselves, could not have spoken with less apparent reserve, betraying, as he went on, a thorough acquaintance with the inspired writers, and a liberality in his views which augmented the esteem already accorded to his less serious acquirements. When rising to take leave, he thanked us for our indulgence, saying, 'That such topics being the most pleasing of any other to himself, he felt the highest gratification in meeting with enlightened and liberal Protestants, by whom he was not shunned as a bigot; and who, instead of closing their hearts to a Catholic brother, shrunk not from discussions so interesting and important to every denomination of Christians.'

It is very pleasing, very flattering, to hear oneself called enlightened and liberal. Mr. Mac Cardwell had told me that I was narrow-minded and harsh. Charles knew that he also was thus

classed. We were agreeably surprised to find ourselves so much more justly appreciated by so much better a judge; and we appreciated him in return. From that moment, had Mr. Austin been Dr. Bentley himself, we could scarcely have felt less restraint in his presence. Subjects vitally connected with our happiness were freely discussed. We did not contradict, by suspicion or reserve, the good opinion already formed of us by the Confessor. If previously charmed by the indescribable interest of his general conversation, the versatility of his talents, or variety of his accomplishments, that charm was doubled when thus permitted to analyse his mind; of which piety seemed to be the all-pervading principle. Chateaubriand himself could not have expressed his sentiments in language more sublime, more beautiful, more poetical, than did Mr. Austin. But, highly as he was informed on every subject, no subject was ever obtruded; his great art consisted in appearing to withhold; in exciting curiosity, which he never fully satisfied. There was always some beauty concealed behind a veil, of which the development was anxiously looked to. And there was always a wish, implied if not expressed, of gaining information from us, which went further, perhaps, than anything else, in conciliating our favor. He questioned us closely on certain points of faith, not as it would appear for the purpose of confuting them, but really as if he desired information. And, seeing him thus incline a willing ear, thus attentive, thus anxious to learn—sometimes observing that he seemed struck, that a truth pricked, or a text of Scripture silenced him into thoughtfulness—we were actually led to cherish the presumptuous hope, that by conversations such as these, by reasonings such as we could adduce, the Roman Catholic professor might be led into a recantation of his errors.

How have I since blushed for the short-sighted folly which urged on topics of such a nature, in presence of so profound a master; for that self-conceit which, presuming to contend with prejudices firm as a rock of adamant, exposed my ignorance to the secret scorn of one who could not fail to ridicule, while he penetrated the puerile attempt for his conversion. How deeply mortified have I often felt at the recollection of those wasted hours, when the wily Jesuit, by flattering my vanity, and giving me his attention, led on a simple-minded, unsuspicious female,

to wander in the wild fields of controversy, where she must either lose her way, or fall into one of the many traps disguised within its tangled mazes.

Charles was no less enthusiastic on the subject of Mr. Austin's conversion than myself. And the new interest which robbed Bath of its tediousness, suspended his yearnings for home. How could it be otherwise, when, bent on achieving so glorious a conquest, he was flattered with hopes of success—with hopes, not only for the Confessor, but for his wife? our credulity going so far as to believe, that because Clotilde was a silent, she must also be an approving, witness of all that was going on. We could think, we could talk of nothing else; but we did not penetrate her real feelings—we did not see that it was the growing influence of Mr. Austin, and our final renunciation of heretical errors, to which her expectations pointed; or that one consequence of such influence afforded her unmixed gratification, namely, a very softened feeling on the part of her husband—if not to the Romish religion, at least to the ministers of the Romish church. Certain it was, that he and I equally agreed, that Mac Cardwell, instead of representing that church, or those ministers, was a very unworthy member of the body.

Hurried on by our desire to 'snatch a brand from the burning,' we hunted all the libraries for the most approved theological works; attended every church where the preacher was likely to make our subject his; took notes of anything that suited our purpose, and returned home, thus stored and thus instructed, with renewed vigor to the charge. We forgot, all the while, that books as yet unread by us, and arguments to us so novel, had formed the chief study of our opponent—if opponent he might be called. We overlooked the fact, that, while our spiritual education had been chiefly derived from Bible truth, his had comprised the whole range of controversial defence; and we were unmindful, that while we sought to gain the end by a straightforward path, our antagonist was enticing us into a labyrinth, which might entrap us to our ruin.

But a righteous intention, however mistaken, is seldom without some reward; and though severe sorrow, and much mortification, are connected with our reminiscences of Bath, still there is something to reflect on with hope; for Clotilde had opportunities

of listening to truths, which, with the blessing of God, may have dwelt upon her mind, and be treasured up there for her comfort and conviction. Can we tell the moment when it may please Him, in His mercy, to turn her sorrows into joy, or when the living seed that was then scattered on the waste, may germinate? You are not to imagine, that the conversations to which I allude assumed a tone of disputation, or even reached to argument; but we 'reasoned together', and, instead of repelling, Mr. Austin met reason half-way. He listened more than talked, and when he did talk never contradicted—carefully eschewing those absurd points which had been so warmly pressed by Mac Cardwell—and instead of vulgar invective, we were interested in quotations from Massillon, and others equally gifted; or edified by anecdotes of Charles Borromeo, St. Louis, and other lights of his church.

Meantime Mrs. Letitia Trevillion had been informed of our new intimacy. She did not speak to Charles on the subject; but told me, that making such an acquaintance had decided her against inviting me to her house, when my brother left Bath—and advised us all going home to Doctor Bentley.

I repeated all she said to Charles, who replied that he hoped very shortly to see our reverend pastor in Bath, as he had written fully to him, and expected his personal aid in the good work we had in hand.

By return of post we received the good Doctor's reply. 'How prompt!' exclaimed Charles,—'how kind!' Its contents ran thus—how far they kept pace with our expectations, a short extract will show:—

'Your letter reached me last night, and confess that the subject both alarms and grieves a cautious old friend, who would rather eschew the path you have insisted upon, than tempt the man-traps and grass-snakes which its luxuriance may hide.

'Should Mr. Austin be all that you describe—"the most intelligent, liberal and candid of men, conversant not only with the Bible, but with the ancient fathers"—how comes it that he yet wanders in darkness? If he have, as he avers, studied dispassionately the works of our great Reformers—how comes it that such lights are unavailing? unless he purposely closes his eyes! And if this be the case, what can be expected

from my feeble lamp?—must it not fail also? If his sight be closed, and his ears shut, would any commentaries of mine suffice to open them? No: be assured they would not; be assured that his conversion is not dependent on us; that it is neither your's, nor mine, nor any mortal interference, that can effect such an end. Mr. Austin is not unlearned, not ignorant; an influence above our control must accomplish the work, must break the stony heart, enter the strongholds of pride and prejudice, and crumble to pieces, with no human strength, the kingdom of antichrist to which he is a subject. Leave him, I pray you, to that superior influence. Remove from an attraction so dangerous, and which seems to have bound you as with a spell. Flight, in such a case, is your only resource; the only means by which you may “keep yourself”, so that the evil one touch you not.

‘I am told that his version of charity is perfectly scriptural; that it does not, like the charity of Mr. Mac Cardwell, inculcate almsgiving; but that he rather preaches long-suffering, forbearance, brotherly love—the charity which covereth a multitude of sins. This I can believe; for his object is to silence and subdue. But I would not, in your case, call such charity love: I would rather call it indifference—indifference on the part of a Protestant husband to the salvation of his Roman Catholic wife, which would reconcile him to her errors, send her, without solicitude, to the confessional, encourage that invidious influence over her mind, and the minds of her young family, whose beginning is slavery, whose progress is deception, whose end is alienation, destruction and death—indifference, which talk of freedom, but intends domination; which preaches peace, but instigates to war; which “speaks lies in hypocrisy”, substituting for God “the devices of man”; which silences truth, and renders inquiry offensive;—such is, in my mind, the *charity* of your admired acquaintance, and which obtains for him the character of a liberal Romanist. Neither you nor your sister are instructed in the profundities of jesuitical artifice; nor would the remainder of your lives, devoted to this purpose, and lengthened to threescore years and ten, suffice for such instruction. Quit, therefore, dear friends, the blandishments which you have not skill to detect; maintain your freedom by escaping their toils; disentangle

yourselves, before it be too late, from the labyrinth into which you have plunged.

'The tempter may talk of universal love; he may call you his brothers and sisters; he may laud your liberality, but he cannot think as he speaks. He may offer the kiss of peace; stretch out the hand of fellowship; ask why the hearts of believers should not be united? or why, while worshipping the same God, trusting in the same Redeemer, there should be adverse feeling? But he chooses to forget, that when idolatry was established, when the 'Vicar of Christ'—having usurped authority over kings and people, with the Council of Trent, uttered anathemas against primitive belief and a pure unadulterated religion—that adverse feeling ensued, and that separation was unavoidable.

'Mac Cardwell I consider a less dangerous associate than this more accomplished Confessor; his policy might be the same, but his tact in concealing it was not so profound. He soon cast away the cloak of humility, and assumed equal rights; not as drawing together the faithful in love, but as contending for privileges, and for the aggrandising of his church. These were his objects, and he continually betrayed them. Mr. Austin has no other objects, but they are more skilfully disguised. He talks, it is true, of liberty, and of equality in all things concerning religion, yet has ascendancy at heart. "Satan talked of equality", says an eminent writer, "when he tempted Eve to disobedience." Satan's followers tempt her offspring by the same specious discourses; and shall we not fear that the end may be similar? Had Eve resisted Satan she would not have sinned. Beware that the cloven foot is not already fastened on you. Doubt your own strength; listen not to seducing spirits; and take heed that the warning of inspiration be not fulfilled, which says, that "in later times some shall depart from the faith."

'Think less of Mr. Austin, and more of yourselves. The mote, despite all our efforts, will rest in his eye. Come home, my good friend, and pluck the beam out of yours: then you will see that he who speaks in such *charitable* terms of a faith he abjures; who talks of Christian sympathies as bringing about spiritual unity; who endeavors to persuade you that there is little difference between us, desires to throw you off your guard, and at length, like the spider when he has woven a fly in his web, to entangle you beyond extrication.

‘Believe me, on the contrary, that such a gulf as divides the two churches is not to be passed. That, until transubstantiation, justification by works, creature-worship, the infallibility of the Pope, and various other differences, are totally given up; in short, all the idolatries, all the innovations of Rome, are abandoned—until Popery throws off her scarlet robes, and returns to the simplicity of apostolic worship,—the very mention of a union between the two churches is as deceptive, and the scheme as impracticable, as raising a second Babel, and reaching heaven by the work of our hands.

‘When your sister was attacked by Mr. Mac Cardwell in the sphere of her usefulness, I felt myself called upon to stand forth in her defence, and took up the gauntlet accordingly; glad of an opportunity to speak some words of truth in presence of a Roman Catholic, who never, till then, heard two sides of a question so vitally connected with her salvation. But the active duties of a parish minister confine my exertions to one narrow circle. I have no time to give elsewhere, or indeed to indulge much in those studies which make the business of conventual life, and which are essential to success in controversial disputation. Mr. Austin makes no open attack, and it would be presumption to suppose that I could, in the course of one or two conversations, counteract the progress of a covert one, especially as the influence you have suffered to take hold on Lady Trevillion—for whose sake alone I would sacrifice one day’s occupation in my parish—renders her reformation a subject of despair. I see no resource but her removal, and I beseech of you not to delay. Let me see you here again, surrounded by those duties which belong to your station. The works begun by yourself and your fair assistants require to be perfected; though we do not subscribe to the Romish doctrine of justification, God forbid that we should deny the parable of the talents, or say, that a tree is not known by its fruits! Come, therefore, and let your light shine before men; come and glorify your beneficent Creator, who has dealt so largely by you; come and take account of your stewardship. Remember, “that it is easier for a camel to go into the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven”; and that “from him to whom much is given, much will be required.” Forgive, I beg, this moral sermonising. There is nothing

new, nothing original in all I have said, but the lessons I inculcate cannot be too often repeated. I entreat you not to reject them for others more novel,' etc.

This letter, though so thoroughly disappointing, was not without effect, for the influence of Doctor Bentley was paramount. We had the self-denial to relinquish our proselyting scheme, and to spend our last day with Mrs. Letitia, who, believing that so immediate a removal was in consequence of her advice, behaved with more kindness than we anticipated; and an invitation from Lady Margaret Melville to meet us at her house in Lancashire so much softened the asperity of the old lady, that she actually desired I should make Bath my resting-place whenever I returned from Scotland. We had not, however, the pleasure of her company to Lancashire, whither, in the first instance, we directed our steps. Charles and Clotilde remained there only one week; at the end of which time I, under the escort of General Melville, proceeded to meet my cousin, Lady Melville, at Carlisle.

Mr. Austin, I have said, was introduced to my sister's notice by the Père Montcalm. But he had other claims, as we afterwards discovered, which might have excused us, even to Mrs. Letitia Trevillion, for permitting the visits of a Roman Catholic priest. Clotilde was a native of the province of Maine; her mother a St. Aubin. The Confessor claimed his parentage at the paternal side from the same stock, and was born in the same province. There was something very similar in their mutual history, his mother being a subject of Great Britain, and having married in the early part of the French revolution—a refugee from that country. These circumstances not only rendered Mr. Austin more interesting, but formed an apology, had we considered one necessary, for the encouragement of an intimacy so pleasing to all parties. Indeed, our short sojourn at Bath was pregnant with events which appeared to us, short-sighted mortals, most propitious for Clotilde.

I have omitted to mention in the proper place, that shortly after our arrival, she received tidings from France of an acquisition of fortune, bequeathed to her by a distant relation, Monsieur de St. Aubin, proprietor of fine estates, and an old chateau near La Valière, on the north banks of the Loire; all

of which she was to enjoy for her life, and which were to descend to her next child, male or female, who should be born in the said old chateau.

The testator, a modern free-thinker, made no condition as to religion; and thus Charles had an additional motive for wishing that the infant, whose birth might be expected in October, should prove to be a boy; while Clotilde, delighted with the magnificent donation, and with the condition annexed, looked forward, as it was natural she should, to the pleasure of spending a winter in France.

‘It is no joy to me to be independent in money matters of my noble-minded husband,’ she said; ‘but I am charmed, that his power of conferring benefits should be enlarged through my means. It is also gratifying to visit the ancient domains of my ancestors—to *feel that they are mine*—and to see my native province. I know it is a general custom in France for the heir of the estate to be born under the ancestral roof. I am glad this good old custom should still be kept up, and must take care to reach the chateau in time, or else my legacy will not descend to my children, but may be litigated by whoever is the male heir of my generous relative. You will, therefore, return to us, my dear Mary, before the first of September, when our journey to La Valière must take place. I shall like much to show Charles his new possessions with all the advantages of the vintage.’

I readily promised to reach Pendyffryn in time, believing that a visit of four months in Scotland would give me enough of that northern climate; and little dreaming that the stern features of Caledonia would wear for me, long before the expiration of that period, an aspect more endearing than the soft smiles of my own native Cornwall.

CHAPTER XII.

At Carlisle I was received by Lucy Melville. We had not met since the melancholy period when her mother came from Scotland to watch by the death-bed of mine. And though Charles called Lucy heartless, my impression was far from being his; for, when I sustained the greatest loss that can befall a female, she took the orphan to her bosom, and bestowed on me the affection of a parent.

The most acute sense of suffering attendant on then leaving home, was that such removal separated me from Lucy. Nor did I like my brothers the better, that they professed no admiration for her, and that they refused consigning me to the care of my aunt. Especially I felt indignant with Charles, who said she was an icicle, and would make me as cold and as Scotch as herself. Now, as it happened that I loved Scotland for Lucy's sake, and Lucy for her own, my mortification at the time was extreme, in not seeing the country of which she told so much; and the speech of my brother was a long while afterwards remembered with anger. Besides, young though I was, it had come under my observation, that could Charles have liked his cousin, who was an only child, their marriage would have gratified my mother. Acquainted with her wishes, I had set my heart on their accomplishment. But his opinion was different; he preferred joining his regiment in India.

The glowing cheeks and glistening eyes of Lucy, as she ran down stairs at our appointed meeting place, did not disappoint me. Nor, as she pressed my hands, and glanced those soft eyes over my altered person, kissing me again and again, did I recognise any of that heartlessness of which I had heard her accused. Still it must be acknowledged, that she was

both changed and improved, being that sort of face and figure which looks better at six-and-twenty than at sixteen. She was now a most interesting and pleasing woman. She had been a silent, common-place girl, who could only find courage to speak in a corner; with feelings worth drawing forth, and a heart worth the seeking, but too repellent from shyness to excite an interest in her favor.

Mrs. Melville's residence, some miles beyond the border, answered and did not answer my expectations; for the scenery wanted that boldness which I imagined was every where to be met with in Scotland; while a strong contrast to the south of England, gave to the place and the people every advantage of novelty. And, had not the distant heights of Cumberland, the nearer hills of Nithsdale, and the blue waters of the Solway, which we saw from our windows, been really objects of admiration, the hospitality with which I was welcomed, and the peculiar charm with which perfect contentment endued that blessed spot, would have amply compensated their loss.

Feeling at home in the house of such affectionate relations, there was something in the change from Bath to Heathery Haugh, peculiarly soothing to the then state of my mind. I had come from scenes of excitement, from controversy, from hearing a great deal said about religion, to where, without talk, it was brought into all the scenes and circumstances of daily life—I should perhaps say, without disputation, for that which completely fills the heart, must sometimes escape the lips. But what did escape was so humble, so thankful, so totally removed from comparisons, that, while it made the very soul of conversation, it never made a subject of dispute.

I had listened to expositions given in a truly Christian spirit by Doctor Bentley, but, at the same time, to much that was unpleasant on the other side: and until Mrs. Letitia Trevillion's rebuke, and the receipt of the Doctor's salutary, though mortifying letter, I had forgotten, in my zeal for the reformation of another, that there were many things in which I wanted reformation myself; and that such rash interference, instead of deserving the highest praise, merited the disappointment it met with. But at Heathery Haugh all such heart-burnings were

ever; and, happily removed from a continual searching for errors, it was like being wafted

° To regions mild, of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot,
Which men call earth,"

to make one in a circle where controversy was unknown, where domestic harmony was cherished in a society of Christians from motives pure as sublime; where gladness beamed on every countenance, and contentment reigned in every heart. It was heaven upon earth to be received into a family so blessed in its head as was the household of Mrs. Melville; who, though not possessed of superfluities, was for ever bestowing favors; and, like charity, seeking nothing in return. In short, if ever any person was lifted spiritually above the cares and the casualties of life, that person was Mrs. Melville. Sensible and acute, but mild and conciliating, she could advise without offending, and interfere without appearing intrusive: while her experience and knowledge were so tempered by benevolence, that no fellow-creature, however inferior, felt in her presence the pains of inferiority. I never knew a heart so overflowing with gratitude, or heard a voice so attuned to thanksgiving. Yet we are aware, that had she liked complaint more than praise, there would have been no great difficulty in making out a case. Of three lovely children, but one blessed her age; and the sons whom she lost were as much loved as the husband to whose grave she consigned them. But her religion was like a vigorous tree, the tears of affliction gave strength to its roots, and the luxuriance of its fruits was the test of its cultivation.

The advantage of living beneath such a roof may, I trust, be a lasting one; for it was a privilege, indeed, to get acquainted with one heart in this world of ingratitude, so filled with heavenly things as to leave no room for earthly repinings—to witness the confirmation of that promise fulfilled to those who obtain a spiritual victory, and abide by the command of 'casting all their care upon God'. But I forget that Mrs. Melville is your relative; that she is better known even to you than to me; and that thus, while dwelling upon excellences which involuntarily arrest my pen, I yield to a selfish gratification. Yet, kind as I invariably found her, beautiful and beneficial as was her example, indelible as is the impression of her virtues,

I cannot choose but linger on so pleasing a theme, or refrain from recurring to that favored period of my life, which was full, not only of present good, but of future promise. I cannot help acknowledging, that to her example and her precepts, I owe the strength of mind which enables me to look back upon what I sacrificed—upon our first acquaintance at Heathery Haugh, upon the engagement sanctified by her approbation, and the flattering prospects that then awaited me—not with the bitterness of ill-sustained disappointment, but rather with such sensations as a traveller looks back upon one bright spot in his troubled journey, which sheds an influence on the remaining way, and outlives the remembrance of its difficulties.

But the drop of bitterness to which I have already alluded—the penalty of mortal error—was still in reserve to dash the cup of pleasure from my lips. Two months had scarcely elapsed since my arrival in Scotland, when some communications from home rendered me uneasy. But this uneasiness I durst not impart, for my brother's letters were its cause, and the subject was sacred. Clotilde had been ill, but was recovered ; and there appeared nothing in her correspondence, except a conciseness more than common, which evidenced any alteration, either as to health or to spirits. Kind soul! had she, not in consideration for me, put a restraint on her pen, I should have been aware that the alteration was alarming. But Charles, not so cautious of giving me pain, did not so considerably restrain himself; and intimations not very pleasing became gradually more explicit, and assumed, in course of time, the character of complaints.

Mr. Austin had been appointed Chaplain to the newly-arrived family at Morvyn Hall. He had preceded his patron to Cornwall, and spent a few days at Pendyffryn, where his Bath friends were alike happy to receive him. But their hospitable pleasure, as it seemed, was not without its drawback; for, however agreeable, amiable, and intelligent, however bland and deferential in his manners to Dr. Bentley, the latter was reserved and chary of approval. And as Charles had set his heart upon bringing them together, he felt his disappointment the more, expressing himself to me a little hurt on the occasion.

I regretted this much ; but, at a distance from the influence to which he was subjected, my judgment was more impartial ; and rather than accuse our good old friend of prejudice, I felt myself inclined to give him credit for penetration. A letter which he wrote me shortly after his introduction to Mr. Austin, will best depict his sentiments on that occasion, and serve to show in what light he viewed our admired acquaintance :—

‘You will expect that I should say something of Lady Trevillion’s newly-arrived Confessor ; but to form any decided estimate of this gentleman would puzzle Lavater himself ; except that, in manners and conduct, he is decidedly a gentleman.

‘With her Ladyship’s usual warmth of panegyric, she extols him to the skies, and speaks of him as the most interesting person of her acquaintance. If she means by this, that he excites the most curiosity, I agree. His personal appearance is a letter of credit, and first impressions have their effect. I admit, as every one must, that he is remarkably pleasing, intelligent and forbearing.

‘I found him extremely well-informed, and sufficiently candid ; with an exterior peculiarly calm, and an adaptation of manner to those with whom he communicates, which, in very superior persons, must be the result of benevolence. This was my first and most favorable impression. Before we met again there was time to reflect on his character ; and, the dazzle having in some degree subsided, to examine it dispassionately. In a second interview I could perceive, that, while lying in wait for the sentiments of others to develope themselves, he artfully guarded his own ; that an unpremeditated opinion never escaped him ; that he possessed the talent of rendering his own acquirements conspicuous, without the slightest appearance of display ; that he understands your brother’s character, as if he had known him for years ; and, however uncharitable the conclusion, that both his simplicity and his candor were factitious, and overlaid his natural disposition.

‘To you I need not observe that his learning is extensive, and his conversable talents admirable. But I must say, that Lady Trevillion sets too high a value on these things, which, after all, have nothing to do with the principles or the

heart; and that she takes for granted, what is by no means a matter of course, that their possessor must be intellectual. I could almost wish, she were less intellectual herself, or (to use a homely expression), more matter-of-fact and commonplace.'

This extract will suffice to show the sentiments of the writer. And I must confess that, having read it, mine underwent a great modification. I began to suspect the sincerity of such elaborate show, and to dread a recurrence of the former influence, or rather of an ascendancy infinitely more dangerous than that from which we had suffered so materially before. I knew it could not be long until the eyes of his old friend would direct the observation of Charles, and create a reaction unfavorable to the man who had now got a footing into the house, and a permanent establishment in the neighborhood. All that I foreboded was verified too soon.

Referring to the two clergymen, in a letter subsequent to that I have just quoted, Charles said: 'I miss Dr. Bentley, who has gone to London on business, extremely; for, after all, I begin to think our good pastor is much the superior. There is both freshness and truth in all he says and does, that bears an original stamp: a probity, a clearness of judgment, which I never saw elsewhere combined with such acumen. The problem which would puzzle others for hours he solves, as it were intuitively, and makes as clear as daylight, by a word. In short, my dear sister, the longer we know, the more undoubtingly we trust him; for he is one of those whom there is no difficulty in understanding, and on whom we may with safety repose. Mr. Austin is altogether different: I begin to perceive something enigmatical in his character. Perhaps, with my zeal for his conversion, his chief interest subsides; but let the fault be where it may, I am ill at ease: we do not assimilate in our feelings and pursuits as we seemed to assimilate at Bath. Possibly my home-spun occupations are, in his estimation, objects of contempt; or, it may be, his great perfection, that of being so intellectual, places him, on further acquaintance, above my comprehension. I feel myself, in comparison, a very inferior person, not qualified to be the associate of so accomplished a scholar. But when the purchasers of Morvyn Hall come to reside in the country, their chaplain may not have so much leisure to give Pendyffryn. At all events, the

period for our continental journey draws on, and we shall probably find enough of interest in our possessions upon the banks of the Loire, to detain us there during next winter and spring.'

Such communications as these, with one or two unusually concise and restrained from Clotilde, prepared me for unpleasant explanations. I saw that things went wrong; that an incipient jealousy of Mr. Austin—at least, of his superior attainments—was taking possession of Charles, than which nothing could be more unfortunate, as he was one of those persons who thought too humbly of themselves, and, though never doubting the rectitude or the affection of his wife, he was too sensitive of what he imagined to be his own unsuitableness—a prepossession that realised its own apprehensions, by rendering him thoughtful, gloomy, and constrained. Adding twenty years to his age, it gave him the appearance of coldness, when, in reality, his error was an excess of sensibility; it totally extinguished that lightness of heart which carries its possessor through subordinate trials.

More of the hero than the philosopher, Charles could front, without shrinking, the severest misfortunes; but he was deficient in equanimity, and in those qualities which rise daily and hourly above petty cares; and yet this species of courage is more called for in a state of existence where petty cares often make the sum total of our being, than that sterner fortitude which, had Charles been a Cranmer or a Latimer, would have led him to the stake.

I saw him as an accepted happy lover, as a bridegroom, the most cheerful of men; all the fine qualities of his heart drawn out at the call of affection. I witnessed the development of his generous feelings at Pendyffryn, his indulgence as a husband, his tenderness as a father. I saw the cloud pass over his brow, and renew that apparent austerity of manner which was produced by disappointment, by the dreadful consciousness that there 'where he had garnered up his heart', the confidence it reposed in was withdrawn. This feeling again subsided with the removal of the cause, and a complete reaction rendered him happier than ever.

But it was happiness, as I now feared, of transient duration; and I pictured him to myself in a moody frame of mind,

silent, reserved, yielding to imaginary rivalry, repelling the affection on which his very being depended, making no effort, and leaving all the 'vantage ground' to another; which other, though too refined and jesuitical to display his authority over the Roman Catholic wife—to blazon, like Mac Cardwell, a vulgar success—might not be slow to place himself in contrast with the seemingly heartless husband, to blend the most delicate commiseration with the deepest respect, and, licensed by his position as a Father-Confessor, to pour consolation into her wounded heart, and maintain an intelligence which, unless thus licensed, she would be the last to permit.

Seriously apprehensive for the peace of persons so dear, I reproached my own heart for its happiness; and much as there was in your preference to gratify a brother, it was not without pain that I made known that preference to Charles.

Approval he could not withhold; but it was, as you know, coupled with a condition of delay. I had no intention of forfeiting my promise to Clotilde; and your considerate arrangement of joining us in France, by obviating all difficulties, rendered me easy. Alas! how little did I apprehend the frustration of our plans! how little foresee, when you left me at Heathery Haugh to make a short sojourn at Melville Lodge, that it was our final separation!

Already prepared by the tenor of my correspondence, I was more distressed than surprised at the reasons alleged by Charles, when urging my immediate return; and, anxious to vindicate the injured Clotilde—injured by the unjust suspicions of her husband—I set off without a moment's delay, without waiting to apprise you of my movements. Indeed, my brother wrote in such apparent anxiety of mind, that every hour seemed an age until I found myself upon the road, and, except in one instance, obeying his wishes to the letter.

But, in that instance, I considered disobedience a duty; and, though cautioned to say no more than that our removal to France was the cause of my hurry, I took my Aunt Melville into confidence, and made her acquainted with the truth, viz. that domestic unhappiness at Pendyffryn, and the absence of Doctor Bentley, rendered my presence necessary to Charles—as necessary perhaps to my beloved, unfortunate sister, whom I taught her to commiserate, and to think

of as more 'sinned against than sinning.' My aunt stood to me in the light of a mother; she was our nearest relation; as much concerned in preserving the family honor as ourselves. It would have been impossible for me to practise the slightest reserve with a friend so truly kind and so worthy of confidence—under engagements, too, with her nephew I felt doubly accountable; and by whom could my explanations be so properly or so delicately conveyed as by our mutual relative?

You know the rest. She did, indeed, fulfil the trust—she performed the arduous task of vindicating my conduct without being enabled to explain it. Never shall I forget her kindness and delicacy on that trying occasion; never our parting at Penrith—whither she and dearest Lucy insisted on escorting me; nor cease to appreciate the line of duty which her better judgment pointed out, should circumstances require its fulfilment.

CHAPTER XIII.

I PASS over my long journey into Cornwall, which, independent of what I expected to meet at the end, was sad in the extreme. Scarcely stopping to rest, and travelling with impatience, I reached my brother's door even sooner than he expected me; and oh! how dreadful it is when the weary traveller arrives at home, to feel the pulse beat fuller, and the heart throb quicker, but not with joy—to have hurried on with burning eagerness, yet within sight tremble to approach.

“Who can express that fear,
“When the heart longs to know, what it is death to hear.”

Such were my sensations when, alighting from the carriage, I looked in vain for a welcome from Charles or Clotilde. He, however, met me as I passed through the vestibule; and in accents that betrayed how ill composure was assumed, thanked me for my promptitude, and led me to the library, where in a few seconds we were joined by his wife.

Alas! what a change in that beloved being, who was but the faded wreck of her former self; for sorrow and thoughtfulness had settled on her brow, who, while she received me with the tenderness of our happier days, proved by the nervous tremor of her hands, and the rush of tears to her eyes, that there was no gladness at heart.

But the looks of her husband were still more alarming; and, as he sat apart, abstracted and gloomy, making now and then a cold inquiry for our Scottish friends, and again relapsing into silence, all the awe and the restraint of my school-girl-days usurped their old place over my feelings.

No open display of wordy unkindness, but a cold, constrained withdrawal of confidence on his part; a depression—not an annihilation of feeling—upon her's, betrayed the misunderstanding between husband and wife. Had I arrived one hour sooner their dear boy had been present; and the unconscious liveliness of infancy is the best interruption of restraint.

But until Charles had unburdened his mind, till Clotilde had poured out her heart, such restraint must continue; and I thought it best to plead fatigue, and retire. She came with me; we went into the nursery, William was asleep in his little white bed, a lovely representative of innocence and peace.

I stooped to kiss him—the mother bent over both. I turned round to embrace her, and was strained to a heart which beat against its bosom, as a bird against the wires of its cage. Restraint was at an end—that dreadful restraint, so new to us both, and so agonizing to practice.

‘Oh, my poor Marie!’ she murmured, ‘what a welcome to your home! To-morrow all shall be explained. But, now, go to your bed, and forget for a moment the most wretched of mortals.’

These words were no anodyne; but I went to my room, where we parted without speaking; and where, when alone, I found my only relief in weeping uncontrolledly.

I looked out upon the lawn. The moon was at the full—the sky unclouded: and so perfectly still was the night-breeze, that the leaves of the trees seemed to sleep on their branches. It was an hour of repose—of meditation; and the nocturnal peace of all without—the beautiful serenity of the elements—formed a sad contrast with the sinful indulgence of those human passions which alone prevent us from contemplating such objects with delight, and encouraging those holy thoughts and aspirations—which nights such as I describe, were doubtless meant to incite.

I still sat by the window: I had extinguished my light, but the clock struck two. It was time to rest; but as I arose, a glimmering light amongst some trees beneath, fastened curiosity to where I stood, and its dubious appearance added a feeling of awe to that of surprise. But I ascertained that it was the reflection of a candle from some window in the basement story: at the same moment sounds of music floated on the air—faint,

certainly, but sufficiently distinct to prove that they were produced by an organ, and came in the direction of the chapel.

For the first time, I felt angry with Clotilde: such practices were quite enough to account for the austerity of Charles, and incite feelings of jealousy so inherent to the nature of man. Not personal jealousy of an individual, but a superior influence, without the susceptibility of such painful feeling. As I have heard him say: 'There could be no real love.'

Doubts of Clotilde's safety—apprehensions vague but urgent—impelled me to seek her. I ventured forth without a light, and reached the chapel without interruption.

Clotilde was singing at the organ: her voice, subdued to its lowest notes, was plaintive to sadness. She started up on my entrance, and uttered a scream. But, seeing who was the intruder, she recovered from her alarm, and reproached me for not being in bed.

'And why not there yourself?' I inquired. 'My night rambles disturb no one. You are accountable to others. Charles, you know, is not a very sound sleeper.'

She colored: and turning away, said hastily: 'You are, then, ignorant that I have fitted up the little room for my own exclusive use that was his study.'

'On the basement story? That room so remote! so solitary! Oh, Clotilde!'

'Celeste has her couch in the same chamber.'

'And your husband, where is he?'

'Your brother,' she replied, 'has not been inconvenienced. His apartments remain as they were.'

'And is it come to this?' I cried. 'Are you, indeed, separated?'

'Listen to me,' she intreated. 'Hear my sad, sad story. Sit down, dear love, and let me tell you all.'

I obeyed. I could not stand: she clasped my hands tightly in her's, and proceeded to tell me such a misstatement of facts, as proved at once whence that misstatement proceeded—its motives and its fatal consequences!

She had been persuaded that her husband had joined in a conspiracy to drive her Confessor from the country, by falsely accusing him of robbing the dead; that Juba was suborned by Banks, and other malevolent persons; and also, that, previous to the arrest, the arm of Charles had been raised to assault

the anointed Priest—that he had dealt a sacrilegious blow on the Confessor. ‘Mother of Mercies!’ she continued, ‘what a crime is here! and, as a Protestant, he cannot satisfy—the guilt remains. But an offended hierarchy, in tenderness to me, have forborne to seek such reparation as the laws of England might afford, while those of Rome, insulted in the person of a faithful servant, decree’—

‘Of Rome?’ I exclaimed. ‘Surely no foreign laws — no ecclesiastical priests, have any power or right to interfere with a free-born Englishman!’

She implored of me not to be terrified. She saw that the Church of Rome could not avenge its insults personally (she believed) upon Charles. But, added: ‘Alas! it can hold him guilty of sacrilege! and an interdict may reach him. It has already reached him through me! The sentence has gone forth—we are separate. Oh, my sister! if we disobey, there is a power to compel obedience—to anathematize your miserable sister. Marie! my mind is made up; should the unborn survive—should I outlive its birth—my destiny is fixed; a convent must ensure my safety, and the safety of my (too dear) Charles; for the penance of an irrevocable parting can alone satisfy my church.’

I asked her if her husband was aware of her resolution, and its motives.

She told me that she was enjoined to be silent while in England; but that she had written to the Père Montcalm, imploring for leave to be candid; that if Charles understood the motives of her conduct, she would not be so entirely wretched.

I assured her that I would explain; that I would not conceal my knowledge of her sufferings; that I would remove the inference that must be drawn from such mysterious conduct. I told her that I was present at what was termed a sacrilege. That the chastisement was only threatened, not practised; that it could not be construed into an assault; and that as there had been no personal collision, there could not possibly be a drawing of blood. ‘Oh, my poor Clotilde! how they impose upon you!’ I added, indignantly.

She arose and threw herself at my feet. ‘Wait! wait! I implore you, until we hear from Paris! Let us trust to the kindness of the Père Montcalm. He loves me little less than you

do: he will advise; he will assist. Marie, have compassion; you know not what you may draw down upon yourself—upon me—upon us all, by precipitation.'

Her arms clasped my knees; her head rested on my bosom; her sobs penetrated my heart. I embraced her. I implored her to be calm. Impelled alike by anger and sorrow, I condemned the intolerance of the church—the cruel tyranny of her priests. I urged the renunciation of such galling chains; and, with what eloquence I could command, with every argument I could adduce, reprobated the dastard practice of concealment. I placed in the strongest light that was in my power, the deceptions practised on her credulity. I exposed the errors of her creed, and dwelt upon the purity of our's. Above all, I insisted upon that freedom of conscience, which, based upon so many texts of Scripture, Protestants, out of the fervency of their faith, first asserted, and now enjoy.

She retained her humiliating posture while I spoke, and, at first, resisted my efforts to alter it. Her sobs grew fainter as I proceeded—her tears ceased to flow. Absorbed by my extreme agitation, I perceived not that her heart ceased to beat, and mistook her silence for attention, until relaxing her grasp, she slid gently from my arms, not in a state of actual insensibility, but of torpor, the consequence of long-suffering and of excessive grief; so thoroughly helpless, that it was with the utmost difficulty I raised her to the sofa. But terror supplied me with strength, and I succeeded, unassisted, in placing her there; when uttering one deep long-drawn sigh, the weight with which she fell upon it so nearly resembled death, that, but for a recurrence of those heart-rending sighs, I should scarcely have hoped that she lived.

And, oh! how sad it was, when kneeling beside that couch, and looking on one so young, so lovely, and so beloved, to think that a state of insensibility was for her, in comparison, a state of peace; that the resuscitation of her faculties, the recurrence of consciousness, should prove, in the case of one like her who possessed so many blessings, an awakening to wretchedness alone—an event more to be dreaded than desired.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was now proved, beyond dispute, that a malice which never sleeps, vengeance never to be satisfied, had been long and secretly at work to wreak its fury on our devoted heads. That Mac Cardwell (having trodden the verge of danger, braved justice to the face, and escaped by the aid of a *finesse*), was no longer the accused, but the accuser; and not only the accuser, but the judge. Here was the disclosure of the *secret*—here was displayed the successful expediency, which, stopping at nothing, prefers the end to the means. Hence the source to which we owed our divisions, and the dissolving of an union which had promised so much good.

Alas! how short-sighted had we been in rejoicing over the removal of an enemy, whose influence could reach us from afar. How much worse than short-sighted, when throwing off one incubus, we so soon loaded ourselves with another. Mr. Austin was, no doubt, in league with the former Confessor. Mr. Austin, who, true to his creed, had assumed for a time the tone of moderation, only till the plot should be ripe—the hour at hand—only till he could exercise his fatal authority for the total immolation of their victim.

She lay as if for dead, that poor deluded victim!—a low murmuring, and an occasional tear which dropped from her closed eye-lids, alone indicating life. But my endeavours to restore her were suddenly interrupted by a distinct rustling of the foliage which hung about the window; and, recollecting that the open shutters and the lights must expose us to observation from without, I rose, though not with much courage, to secure our privacy.

But I dared not proceed—I dared not perform my purpose; for a foot was on the gravel, and something like a human form

retreated from the window on my approach. At a sight so appalling, the power of motion forsook me. We were so solitary, so defenceless, so remote from protection—a pane of glass only between us and some prowler of the night. All I could do was to extinguish the candles; and then, standing in perfect darkness, every object without became more distinct—the shrubs, the grass-plot, the bright light of the moon, and the retreating figure of a man, who, still keeping the window in his view, secreted himself, as he thought, beneath the spreading covert of a walnut-tree.

At so frightful a confirmation of my fears I was perfectly paralysed. To close the shutters would have been an effort far beyond my courage; to move from where I stood was as little in my power. I could only sink upon the nearest seat, and fix my eyes on one terrific object, the outline of whose tall figure, though not his face, was accurately described in the moon beams. His form was not that of a clown, neither did it resemble Mac Cardwell, who, I must confess, first occurred to my mind. It was a dignified, an aristocratic form, enveloped in a large dark cloak, the cape of which was thrown over, and partly concealed the head. There was something peculiar about that cloak, something melancholy, but graceful in the figure thus enveloped. I looked intently for a minute. Was it? Oh, yes! too surely I was right—too indubitably the figure was that of Mr. Austin.

Description fails to portray the horrors of that discovery, for thoughts rushed to my brain and convictions to my heart, the most injurious, the most unkind, yet not altogether unnatural. Fear, however—personal fear—I no longer felt; for it was at once superseded by indignation—by a sense of the wrong into which Clotilde was entrapped—by the deepest of all insults perpetrated against my brother. ‘I am here to save her,’ was the first impulse of my thoughts. ‘She shall be saved; and shall quit a spot so disgraced by his presence; yes, the incendiary shall learn that I know him; that his baseness is discovered. Oh, my Clotilde! my sister—my friend—you shall yet be preserved!’

With this heroic resolution I advanced to the window, my heart throbbing violently, but my purpose unshaken; and, prepared to accost a fiend in human shape, I undrew the bolt, and stepped out on the walk. Had he retreated I could have followed; had he come on but one foot-fall I could have persevered.

But he remained fixed as a statue; and there was something in his stern and immoveable position, as he stood under the shade of the old walnut, with his arms crossed beneath the folds of the cloak, and his bent head enveloped in its abundant cape, impressively awful. I had now no personal fears to surmount. It was the moral injury, that a visit so mysteriously conducted and so suspiciously timed, must affix to Clotilde, which filled me with alarm; but it was alarm surpassed by resentment. I thought of my brother, of the dreadful consequences that might ensue—the loss of character, perhaps of life—were he at that moment in my place. Again my courage was stimulated, and making a desperate effort, I said, sternly and distinctly: ‘Mr. Austin, you are known: everything is known. I am not deceived, and I warn you to depart, without one moment’s delay, from a spot which you have surrounded with destruction. Leave my unhappy sister to the protection of her own more honorable friends, or I shall call for aid which, in this country, suffers no human being to be the victim of persecution.’

Still the mysterious figure maintained its rigid position. Had there been a movement—had there been a word, I could have sustained myself; for the sound of a foot-fall or of a voice, of any human voice, would have saved me from fainting. But the impenetrable silence, the statue-like stillness struck me with undefinable terror; and, turning suddenly round, I rushed to the window, pushed it in, and fell forward.

Immediately a step was at my side. I was raised; I was spoken to; I was reassured. Ah! what a misconception! I had taken my brother for the Confessor. I had confounded his stately figure with that of Mr. Austin. Yet the latter was stately too; and their almost equal height, the cloak made at Bath after a travelling one of his then favorite associate, with the shadowy light, had all aided my delusion. He bore me in his arms toward the bath; we sat down on the steps; and then, in accents the most miserable that ever reached my ear, he said: ‘Mary, I perceive you know all; you took me for Austin; you thought it not impossible that he might be here? I had a vague—a most horrible suspicion myself.’

‘Oh, no! I had no suspicion: I had no reason for any. But I was not thinking of you, and was thinking very much of him. The resemblance of your persons, the peculiar pattern

of the cloak, the chapel, the association of ideas connected with previous events—all put that improbable imagination into my head. Thank Heaven! it was no more than imagination.'

'You are my only sister,' returned Charles, with the most touching solemnity; 'almost my only friend. The honor of a brother may be in your keeping. There are some secrets which it becomes infamy to screen; there are some actions which it is criminal to overlook. I heard you say, taking me for the Confessor, that you knew *all*. I heard you threaten him with the laws of your country. What is this *all*? Wherefore this threat?'

'I spoke in that manner to drive him away, to make him believe that I saw into his designs; for indeed, my dear Charles, I feel perfectly assured that there is a conspiracy on foot to rob Clotilde of her senses, or most likely of her life, before she gives birth to her infant, lest a heretic son should inherit the St. Aubin estates. This strikes me to be the plan. It seems not improbable; or, it may be, that they want possession of herself now that she is rich. I am sure that money—that avarice is at the bottom of all; and, probably, connected with the resentment of Mac Cardwell to you.'

'Why, what can that Priest have to do with us now?'

inquired Charles, impatiently. 'He is in Italy, is he not? We hear nothing of him; his was a vulgar, overbearing tyranny; she must, ere long, have revolted from its impositions; but this polished, this artful, this *intellectual* companion—this "most interesting of men"—it is he, he who proceeds on surer grounds, whom we never should have countenanced, never trusted. It is such an one, who, in the sacred seeming of a Confessor, establishes an undying influence—an influence so confiding and mysterious, so dangerously exclusive. I know not what I say, what I infer, nor how to describe the suffering of my soul; but I am conscious of holding the second place where I once held the first; of being no longer the friend, the adviser, the preferred companion of my wife. She is, alas! a foreigner, a Roman Catholic. I might have known that her education, her religion—'

'Oh! Charles, be more just. Her education was as pure as our own; her religion, though it subjects her to undue domination, and affords dangerous opportunities to the designing,

'a religion, which, in times past, has produced the noblest instances of self-denial, of heroic virtue, and spiritual strength; which even now, deteriorated as it is, and rare as are the instances, emits such lights as may well redeem its general deceptiveness.'

'A religion,' he indignantly exclaimed, 'the moral code of which is so extremely dangerous, that even Napoleon, while he bowed to it for form's sake, forbade the circulation of its test books. And as for spirituality—oh, Mary! talk not to me of spirituality connected with Confessors, or emanating from confessionals. You know not—Heaven forbid that you should know—the horrors to which I allude; which, alas! I dreamt not of, neither inquired about, before I formed that fatal contract which based my honor on such polluted ground.'

'Your marriage,' I replied, when he ceased to speak, 'was no foreign contract. It was the result of mutual inclination. She loved as devotedly as yourself; and at this moment, however appearances may cast a doubt on the truth of what I vouch for, you remain, as ever, the first object of her heart. Indeed, I speak to facts; I do know her sentiments. I know that some secret, cruel penance—not any abatement of affection—'

He interrupted me, impetuously. 'You will distract me if you speak thus. What penances, what secrets should a wife submit to without the participation of her husband? What conscientious spiritual director would wish to supersede a husband's influence? If penances are acts of righteousness—if they are innocent—if unconnected with injury to me, why are they so secretly performed? Mac Cardwell's influence was harmless compared to this. He assumed on it, it is true; but his assumption was of a different kind; it was vulgar, it was offensive. He did not possess the deep mysterious interest, the intellectual intelligence of *Father Austin*. Oh, Mary! it is now the sympathy of kindred minds. In it I have no part.'

'Listen to me, Charles, calmly, if you can. Your wife is most unfortunately circumstanced: she is attached to you most fervently, but she is attached to her religion even more. All devout Roman Catholics are, I believe, more or less, subject to the ministers of their church, and you must not be jealous that she is so. You must not repel her affection; you must submit for a little—now and then—to whatever exactions that church

may require; and always remember, that your trial was self-chosen.'

'It is too clear,' he replied, in a melancholy tone; 'that affection for your friend blinds you to the wretchedness of your brother; and that I am not to possess, on this unhappy subject, an unprejudiced listener even in my only sister. I meant to tell you what I have already suffered; I meant to explain my reasons for quitting home upon so short a notice; but from you no consolation is to be had, and I must endeavour to support my misfortunes alone.'

'Dearest Charles, do not wilfully mistake me! Do not let the good opinion I entertain of your wife—the steadiness of my regard for an inestimable but credulous character—deprive me of your brotherly affection. Tell me, I pray, all you wish I should know. He "from whom no secrets are hid" knows how truly I enter into your feelings.'

'Another time, when I am more the master of those feelings. But this is no hour, nor place. You are cold, and tremble! Alas! how selfish does disappointment and sorrow render us all! You have had no rest: let us return to the house.'

'Come through the chapel,' I said: 'she sleeps; she will not hear us.'

'Oh, no; I dare not trust myself! You go, however, and secure the window. Why is it not closed? What motive can she have in being so accessible?'

'No motive, on my word, but thoughtlessness; or, rather, from her thoughts being unhappily abstracted from outward things.'

'But why here at such an hour?—why not in her bed?'

'Why are we not all in our beds?' I returned. 'Why not enjoying the blessed repose which a beneficent God vouchsafes us for our health; and which, like numberless other mercies as richly bestowed, we abjure, and cast away? Alas! how many who possess not a bed—how many to whom the shelter of a roof is precarious—envy the happier fate of Sir Charles Trevillion! Let us return to the house. The chapel is the most direct; the entrance least subject to observation.'

I drew his arm within mine, and approached the open window: he suffered me to lead him, and we entered with noiseless steps. Clotilde still slept: but the darkness was not so complete as we imagined; for a declining moon sent her horizontal beams

across the chamber, which, resting on the couch of the breathless sleeper, gave to her pale face a hue still paler, and threw over her recumbent figure such a mystic softness, that she looked more like the marble representation of repose, than a being endued with life.

Urged by an irresistible impulse, the unhappy husband approached that mystic figure, and gazed upon the pallid features, which wore an expression as if their last movement had been one of pain. He stooped down: his lips touched the cold cheek, on which some tears still lingered. He instantly rushed from the apartment.

I waited a few moments until he was quite out of hearing, and then went in search of Celeste. She was sleeping most soundly, but got up when called, shrugged her shoulders, muttered something not very respectful of Confessor's penances, then followed to the chapel; from whence we conveyed its almost senseless inmate, who, completely exhausted, had no strength for resistance. Having seen her in bed, and once more in a deep slumber—the result of grief, fasting, and weakness—I returned to my own room, and to those anxious forebodings which banished rest from my uneasy couch.

Charles, when next we met, had little to tell with which I was not previously acquainted. There had been much to create uneasiness, to engender distrust, to rouse the demon Jealousy. But he acknowledged that, though thus tormented, there was nothing on which to ground a positive complaint—nothing specific, until this late separation; that, although conscious of a change in his own feelings toward Mr. Austin—perhaps of betraying that change to Clotilde—yet that she never remonstrated, never complained. Had she accused him of capriciousness, and defended the Confessor, he might have been less wretched: it was her silence, her grief, her quiet submission to what she must deem injustice, that wounded him so deeply; and which, even before her late chilling withdrawal, had inflicted a death-blow on his happiness. Austin had become a fixture in their neighborhood; had visited at Pendyffryn on the same terms as at Bath. But, whether in avoidance of Doctor Bentley, or that he soon discerned a change in the master of the house, the intimacy, once so eagerly cultivated, dissolved into air, silently, coldly, without explanation, reproach, or incivility.

While Charles, not knowing what to think or how to act, sometimes angry with himself, sometimes blaming his wife, sometimes regarding her with the tenderest pity, was himself the most pitiable of men. And, as I could not obtain her permission to repeat what she had confided to me, and that we waited without receiving the answer so long expected from the Père Montcalm, his sufferings, except that he had the power of pouring them into a friendly ear, were but little alleviated by my presence.

Never, surely, did the spirit of intolerance interfere to mar a promise of more perfect happiness; never was error more severely punished than that which had united the destinies of two persons, in themselves so estimable, but between whom religion had placed a barrier that rendered their union, to say the least of it, an act of short-sighted presumption; and never did the demon of dissent exert a more baneful influence than when forcing an ingenuous being to act in opposition to her own feelings of right, or to her natural character, the great beauty of which consisted in its artlessness, and in the boundless overflowings of an affectionate heart.

Charles meanwhile—anxious to fly from that baneful influence—hurried our removal; so that a few days after my return from Scotland we were ready to depart.

Of Mr. Austin we heard nothing more; but I knew that he communicated with Clotilde, and that she wrote him sheet after sheet, entreating permission to be candid with her husband. But her entreaties were disregarded: he justified his refusal on the ground of having applied to a higher power, but that his application was unanswered. We, therefore, left home without one word of explanation between husband and wife; nor did a letter, received at last from the Père Montcalm—full of affection and pity, but otherwise unsatisfactory—bring with it the slightest consolation.

Alas! how little could any of our party have anticipated, when entering the protecting gates of Pendyffryn but eighteen months before, that their closing on our departure should be a sound of relief; that those venerable woods and fertile pastures, which then promised an eden of bliss, should, in so short a time, be fled from in disgust; and be looked back upon, while fading from our view, as the abode of distrust, the scene of estrangement, of divided interests, and of alienated hearts.

CHAPTER XV.

It was late in the evening when our short land journey terminated at Plymouth; from whence, next morning, a packet sailed for Jersey. The passage was prosperous; we went on shore to sleep; spent a whole day on that paradisaical little island, the retreat of Charles, and explored its castle, immortalised by Pym, and next afternoon proceeded so as to catch the tide, and time our entrance into the rocky port of St. Malo with all the benefit of daylight. The weather was fine, and gaily did our vessel cut through the blue waves. The marine prospect was animated, here and there, with a clustering sail of French and English fishing-boats, like little clouds upon the deep; and our steamer passed almost within hail of a frigate, the folds of whose heavy ensign displayed the white field and red cross that had braved the battle and the breeze for a thousand years. We were given to understand, that an arduous service was entrusted to the commander of this gallant vessel.* In his superintendence of the fisheries, he had to keep constant watch over the evolutions of these Arabs of the deep, lest collision of interests, aggravated by national antipathy, should betray the rival crews of the little fishermen into acts that might compromise the honor of their respective countries.

* The commander at present designated to the station off Jersey, is more peculiarly qualified for the nice and difficult duties of his appointment, in having to communicate with the French authorities and naval *chefs*, than perhaps any other officer in her Majesty's service.

With the steady principle, stern resolve, and dauntless intrepidity proper to the British sailor, Lieutenant R—— combines, in intimate union, the *air dégagé*, the conciliating manner, and the conversable politeness which are characteristic of the French gentleman.

Four hours brought us to the insulated fortress of St. Malo. It was market-day, and, as our steamer drew close to the pier, we were surrounded by numberless boats full of admiring gazers; while the mole was crowded with pedestrians, and the distant river looked gay with little barges full of country people, in their best attire, taking advantage of the tide to secure their return to the main land. The novelty of their costumes, the bright and glowing colors in which the females were arrayed, their peculiar and picturesque caps, invested the lively and perfectly foreign scene with an interest not easily forgotten, although it was not without its annoyances. No sooner did our vessel touch the pier, than it was boarded by several custom-house officers, attended by as many *gens d'armes*, and by two coarse-looking women. The first were to take charge of our baggage, the second to examine our passports, and the third our persons. For this last purpose the female passengers were remanded to the cabin, some of whom evinced, by various little shufflings, that such a species of examination was not altogether uncalled for, while others sustained it with perfect heroism. Clotilde and myself, as we happened to enjoy the distinction which French people know how to appreciate—that of rank and attendants—were allowed to pass with only the form of a search; such courtesy being acknowledged according to tacit understanding by the *compliment à l'Anglais* of a few francs.

Our detention in the cabin was consequently short, but when I returned upon deck, Clotilde remained below in conversation with a young French lady, the wife of an officer of chasseurs, who had sailed with us from Jersey. I perceived that the comparing of passports with their passengers was still going on. Charles stood in the stern, looking through a telescope at the citadel. As I would have moved forward to join him, my purpose was arrested by a medical gentleman, who, during our short passage, had already been attentive to my sister. Alluding to her, and indicating with his finger where the *gens d'armes* were surrounding some person near the binnacle, he said: 'I hope that Madame may remain below stairs until that man has undergone his examination, for I am sure they will oblige him to take off his nose.'

'What in the world can you mean?' I inquired, looking toward the individual in question.

'I mean that his nose is a false one. Remark it for a moment; you will see that it is china.'

'Bless me! so it is; quite blue and unnatural. What a very disfiguring feature! But why should those officers force him to remove it?'

'Because, though such a resource is sometimes adopted in cases of bodily ailment, it is also used as a disguise, and has a suspicious appearance. At all events, let the motives of the wearer be what they may, it is as well that Madame should avoid to observe him.'

I thanked my considerate informant, and, instead of joining Charles, returned toward the gangway, accompanied by the former, who called my attention, ere we descended, to the object of our previous remark. He stood with his back to a group of persons collected round the baggage; and was, still remonstrating with his examiners through the medium of an interpreter, when one of them very unceremoniously snatched at the nose, which instantly gave way, and I as instantaneously recognised our quondam post-master of Pandyffryn.

It was a frightful recognition, and I had nearly betrayed myself by an involuntary scream; but the curiosity of my new acquaintance averting his attention from me, he kept his eyes fixed on the still struggling Doughty, and calling out 'A disguise! a disguise!'—joined the police; while I hastened below for the purpose of detaining Clotilde.

She was still engaged in conversation with the young Frenchwoman; and I sat down to recover my presence of mind, and to consider what was best to be done. The figure of the post-master I now recollected to have seen, when first we went on board the packet at Plymouth. Perhaps the peculiar expression given to his countenance, by so strange a disguise, first attracted my notice. Charles had gone below with Clotilde; but, feeling uncomfortable in the cabin, I remained upon deck. It was then that this man, very much muffled up, with the collar of his cloak drawn almost over his face, and his hat pulled down over his eyes, came near me in search of a bag, which, having found, he immediately retired; nor did I see him again until pointed out to me at the end of our voyage. Oh! what a host of terrors, of painful recollections, were conjured up in my mind by this fatal discovery!

To be thus haunted by an enemy!—our steps dodged by the accomplice of the designing Mac Cardwell!—to be caught in the snare of the destroyer! It was a grievous disappointment. It was more: it necessitated the terrible conviction that we were doomed to misfortune, and that wherever we might bend our steps, flight for us afforded no chance, no hopes of escape.

Before the lapse of many minutes we were joined by my brother, who reported that the deck was then clear, and who presently conducted us on shore, or rather on the ramparts. There was nothing to be seen of Doughty or his guards; my medical friend had also disappeared; but the portentous aspect of the post-master haunted my memory. I could think of, I could see nothing else; although there was ample novelty in the number of market-boats, the variety of costumes, the women in their strange-looking head-gear—even in the busy eagerness of rival inn-keepers, all talking together, and each assuring us that his house, and his alone, was the only good one in the town—to divert a mind less painfully engaged; and by the time that a tolerably long walk brought us to the wild and comfortless shelter called an hotel, I was ready to drop, not with what my dear companions believed to be fatigue, but with weakness proceeding from alarm.

We remained in this singular town the following day. We judged it better to do so for the sake of rest; but had it been otherwise, since it was a *fête Dieu*, we could not have released our baggage from the safe keeping of the custom-house. I was perplexed, whether or not to confide my recent discovery to Charles; but, surrounded by strangers, shocked by the sight of priestly processions and every demonstration of Romish influence, I feared to involve him in danger, and came to the resolution of keeping my burden to myself, until we should have left a place which might still be the asylum of a murderer.

Clotilde being rather indisposed, did not venture out of doors. After breakfast I went for a stroll with my brother; when meeting with our medical acquaintance, he asked me if I were not curious to hear the *dénouement* of the nose?—adding, that its wearer had undergone a strict scrutiny at the Hôtel de Ville, and, would have been committed to prison, but that the ecclesiastical

authorities had interfered, and vouched for his veracity; while he accounted for his disguise, and for considerable property found upon his person, by stating, that he was employed to convey a valuable peace-offering from a wealthy penitent to some mediating saint at Rome; and that the false nose, which was extremely painful, and (as might be seen) had bruised the natural feature, was adopted as a penance, at once to expiate some venial sin committed by himself, and to ensure the safety of his consignments while going forward on his pilgrimage.

'And do the civil authorities admit such interference as you describe?' inquired Charles.

'Bah!' exclaimed the physician. 'How can they help it?'

I asked if the adventurous masker had been set at liberty.

'Gone southwards, at an early hour,' returned my informant, 'under the protection of a clerical guide; one who interested himself much in the liberation of the prisoner—more, perhaps, in the safety of his very valuable peace-offering.'

'Such travellers,' observed Charles, 'stand some chance, I should think, of being way-laid and robbed in the forests of Brittany.'

'They are protected by the Jesuits,' returned our companion.

'That august body is sure to look after their peace-offerings.'

'Were poor Juba forthcoming,' methought, 'he might chance to know something of this same valuable peace-offering;' but I kept my suspicions to myself, and returned to our hotel—Charles proceeding with the physician and the Colonel of Chasseurs, who at that moment joined us, to inspect the fortifications of a town, which, to military observation, must be as interesting as they are singular.

Although much relieved by the knowledge of Doughty's departure, it was impossible not to have many anxious thoughts under circumstances so strange and unaccountable. His passing over from Plymouth to Jersey in the same vessel with ourselves might be accidental; but his hazarding recognition in the smaller packet to St. Malo, looked too like a system of concerted *espionage*. Then, again, the interference of a friendly priest—that priest going on with him as his guide and companion—I could not help connecting the whole either with Mac Cardwell or Austin. I could not but feel, that

Doughty had been despatched to Cornwall as a spy upon our movements, as well as for the purpose of conveying that anathematizing letter to Clotilde, which caused her estrangement from Charles; and I could not now but conclude, that we were still under his *surveillance*; and that in England or France, at home or abroad, there was neither safety nor peace to be hoped for.

The road from St. Malo to Dinan is rough, hilly, and tedious; out the river, which runs parallel, and is navigable at high water, affords so charming a sail, that our military friend advised us to send on the carriage, and take a boat with the next tide for ourselves. Nantes was necessarily our last point before proceeding to St. Aubin, as at that city my sister had to see her notary, and to go through some forms before taking possession of her estates. This obligation, consequently, throwing us out of the direct line, we had a circuitous and much less convenient journey to perform. Indeed, the report of both roads and inns was exceedingly discouraging. Our host, at St. Malo, assuring us, 'on his honor', that we should not, at any of the wretched cabarets throughout the line we had adopted, find a bed we could sleep on, or a morsel to eat, Dinan excepted; where there was a splendid hotel, almost equal to his own, or at Rennes, where, of course, there was a choice. But from the latter city to Nantes we must make up our minds to proceed without resting, and be provided with eatables in the carriage.

Here, again, we found that our Colonel of Chasseurs was a most useful adviser. He interposed to set us right, by recommending—in preference to over fatigue, or pursuing our journey in forest darkness—that we should take chance of accommodation at Derval, a small village, or rather hamlet, pleasantly situated about twenty leagues from Rennes, on the borders of the forest of Chateaubriand. The inn, he forewarned us, was only a farmhouse, but it was excellently furnished with beds, and clean as our English tastes could possibly desire—comforts, which at Jersey and St. Malo we certainly did not experience.

Obliged to sleep at Dinan, as the tide served too late to allow of our proceeding further, we paid for the delights of our river voyage, and for the first imposing view of the town, by the thorough discomfort of the 'splendid hotel', and left it early next morning for Rennes. But, however historically interest-

ing that once royal city, however much of romance may be attached to its remains, a vivid recollection of its famed Princess Anne, with all her noble suitors and her gallant court, were insufficient to cause any impression in its favor, so dull and so cheerless did it seem in our eyes.

But had Rennes been the gayest and most beautiful of cities—had the road that we travelled been one of ‘mountain and flood,’ instead of interminable avenues lined with decapitated trees—we were none of us in a frame of mind to appreciate or derive pleasure from outward objects. Without giving a day to the capital of Brittany, we resumed our journey at sunrise—a journey, the prospect of which was not rendered safer to me, from believing that our implacable enemies were on our trail. The image of Doughty haunted me continually. I imagined a foe under every cloak, and my sight either deceived, or I saw him in the dubious daylight hovering about the carriage as we entered it. When working our weary way through roads beyond all calculation tedious, that tedium was rendered doubly irksome from vague, though not idle apprehensions.

But it is not fair to fasten on any route or any country, the unfavorable impression which a mind ill at ease is prone to take of every outward object; and I must acknowledge, that if the part of Brittany through which we passed was deficient in attractive scenery, if there were no hills to diversify its sylvan sameness, no vistas to enliven its forests, still enough remained in its inhabitants to win and to secure approbation.

One hundred years behind, in modern improvement, safe as yet from modern deterioration, generous by nature, loyal in their feelings, and simple in their habits, if the honest and kind-hearted Americans owe their origin to ancient Britain, such relationship does honor to the parent stock, and Cambria may be proud of descendants whose primitive habits—so far as temporalities are concerned—require nothing from father-land, in the way of radical reform, expect, perhaps, a few friendly hints on the state of their roads.

Clotilde, weak and spiritless, could scarcely sit up in the carriage; and I began to be apprehensive lest other dangers, independent of Mac Cardwell or Doughty, awaited us, in the event of our having to spend a night amidst the woods. Most anxiously did we look for the resting-place promised by our

military friend; yet rest was scarcely to be expected in any of those miserable hovels, which, to judge by the specimens already passed, whether cabaret or farm-house, justified the contempt with which every one spoke of Derval, save the aforesaid Colonel of Chasseurs.

But never to be forgotten is our first impression of that primitive retreat, for never did peace or comfort assume a more imposing aspect. Night had overtaken us; the rough causeway was become nearly impassable; the horses were tired, their drivers out of temper; Clotilde lay faint and powerless in the arms of her husband. Repeatedly did we inquire if there were any tokens of a village; as often did the postillions answer in the negative. No noise greeted our ears, no lights emanated through the dark foliage of the unbroken forest. At last—oh, grateful sound!—our ears caught the deep-mouthed barking of dogs; and presently the welcome glare of torches glanced across the road. Then, in a few seconds, the carriage drew up before a porch, supported on rustic pillars, and ornamented with creeping plants. Friendly voices hushed the canine salutation, and inquired if an English chevalier, two ladies and a child, were in the carriage? And on an affirmative answer being given, the host and hostess presented themselves. The former opened the door of our loaded vehicle, received Clotilde in his arms, and transferred her to those of his wife. He then assisted us all to alight; meanwhile, the kind dame bore her helpless charge into a kitchen, clean as if in England, where sundry fowls, roasting before a bright wood fire, betokened an immediate prospect of refreshment. Resting for a few minutes before the invigorating blaze, we had time to remark the appearance of these rustic inn-keepers. The man in his smock-frock, or *blouse*, of bright blue linen, embroidered in scarlet and white, large beaver hat, with the low crown ornamented with large beads of different colors, was only surpassed in appearance by his wife, whose handsome person was set off by a black bodice fitting close to her shape, laced with gold, and clasped, stomacher fashion, with little buckles of the same material; a cap of prodigious height, and formed of the finest lace, a full petticoat of scarlet, and a snow-white apron; from the girdle of which there hung a chased *couteau*, or carving-knife; a screw and scissors, in their silver cases, completed her picturesque

costume. Several servants, dressed less costly, but in a similar uniform, brought in our baggage. Clotilde, borne up stairs, was laid on a couch, in one of the most inviting sleeping apartments that can be imagined, the floor of which, with every article of wood composing furniture, was polished, and shining like a mirror; but round the fire-place, and beside the beds, were placed pieces of tapestry, or milk-white sheep skins, which added comfort to elegance. One door of this dormitory opened into the lobby, another to the apartment beyond—a bed-room, also, but, upon such occasions as the present, converted into a saloon.

There we found a table ready spread: the spoons, and forks, and china, were all so bright—everything, in short, was so delicately neat, that after what we had experienced of larger hotels, the rustic inn at Derval was perfectly luxurious.

Two charming girls, whose very handsome faces bespoke their parentage, and who—except that they wore bright kerchiefs of various hues around their heads instead of caps—were habited like their mother, brought up our travelling bags, and offered their services to wait upon us. Happy change from the attendance of *garçons*! One knelt down, and untying Clotilde's shoes, put on her slippers. She, poor soul! overcome by fatigue, and by the first feeling of relief that she had experienced for hours, burst into tears, and passionately exclaimed: 'O! that I could remain in this place, to be nursed by that kind woman, to be attended by these gentle girls! How happy, how enviable would be my lot!'

This was said in French. The girls shook their heads, while little William, who had slept soundly in the carriage, and was now wide awake, attracted by their pleasant looks, challenged the youngest to play. She caught him in her arms, ran off with him to her mother's apartment, and we heard his joyous laugh through the house. In half-an-hour our dinner was served, and no meal could be better of its kind. Fowls, pigeons, ham and eggs, all the production of the farm, were spread before us, all equally good. Even the wines exceeded any we had met with in the city of Rennes; and novelty enhanced the excellence of the entertainment. In short, the whole *menage* was like fairy-land; the incident had all the characters of a fairy tale. But a question, and its answer solved the enigma; Derval was a hunting-station: the woods were famous for all sorts of

sport, and huntsmen—as many as the house could accommodate—were in the habit of meeting there for a week at a time. We, however, owed the extraordinary comfort of being expected to the attention of our military friend, who turned out to be proprietor of the surrounding property, and who had written from St. Malo to notify our coming.

As might have been apprehended from the state of the roads, we were informed, next morning, that an accident had occurred to the carriage, and it was no disappointment, either to Clotilde or myself, when assured that we must lay by for two days, the only person who could repair the disaster having gone a few leagues from the village. Charles went to ascertain if the report were correct, and we all made up our minds to be content.

A walk in the forest, with our landlord and his gun, helped to pass the morning for my brother; while his wife, glad of a few hours' rest, did not get up until late. I went out a short way with the younger daughter of the house, who carried our dear boy, and amused him with her lively prattle—running, dancing, and singing, till he was in perfect delight; while Celeste remained at home to wait upon his melancholy mother. Clotilde joined us at dinner, looking more languid than ever; and Charles, who had come in rather amused and invigorated by a long morning's successful sport, disposed, perhaps, to forget his misfortunes, was soon reminded by her sadness of their real existence, and relapsed into sadness himself.

Books, with which we took care to be provided, were again our evening's resource; and, as familiar sounds from below broke on the ear of Clotilde, with the songs of her native country and the cheerful voices of her compatriots—indicating their national freedom from care—she sat apart, an isolated being, endeavoring to take an interest in fictitious story; while every recollection of her own spoke of disappointed hopes, or reverted to conventual peace, to parental affection, or early enjoyment.

Heaven knows, that even I, with all my English prejudices, with the prospect of a happy future, which lightened the present burden, could almost have envied these cheerful villagers, and those bright-looking girls, who made a pleasure of their duty; and whose smiles and animated remarks, as they attended to our wants, formed a mortifying contrast with the ascetic feelings and unsocial tempers of their richer, but less graceful inmates.

CHAPTER XVI.

A SECOND day dawned upon us in this abode of cheerful industry and seemingly unalloyed content. Celeste went out for a few hours with Catherine (the elder of the Derval sisters) to visit the neighboring monastery of Chateaubriand: an institution which, owing to the loyalty of the district, perhaps to its privacy in the forest, had escaped the desecrations of the Revolution.* It had its superior, and contained more than its original number of clergy; for the Restoration had brought back many wanderers to the shelter of its venerable walls: some of whom, chastened by privations, were become lights of the church; while the majority, rendered lax in discipline, and hardened of heart by indiscriminate admixture with poverty and vice, were now idly hanging on the benevolence of Mother Church, doing little credit to her protection, and causing much anxiety to all those who were zealous for the reestablishment of religious order.

Our hostess, herself a good Catholic, spoke openly upon the subject, and expressed her horror of these unregenerate sons—in a manner which communicated itself to me, and dispelled that vision of security with which perfect seclusion from the world, and its temptations, had, in imagination, invested Derval.

Alas! it is not upon place, upon country, upon outward circumstances, that virtue or contentment depend. The sequestered village, seemingly remote from every evil, sheltered by its wide-spreading woods, apparently answering the wise man's prayer, who asked for 'neither poverty nor riches';—even that village, like the garden of Eden, had its share in the inheritance of disobedience, its sting, its serpent, in the midst of sweets.

* This district was, in 1829, the property of the Viscount De Chateaubriand.

Celeste returned early. She had seen the chateau, the abbey, and, what was a still greater novelty in that part of France, she had enjoyed an extensive view from a rising ground, not more than one English mile from the village; which view, spreading southward in the direction of Nantes, and taking in some distant towers and spires, besides those of the neighboring monastery, promised a more interesting road for the remainder of our journey than as yet we had traversed.

I felt no inclination to follow her advice, and ascend the '*grande montagne*', of which she spoke in such raptures. But Clotilde warmly urged me to take a little air, and, yielding to persuasion rather than to choice, I set out for a walk, accompanied by Catherine's younger sister, the gentle and intelligent Louise.

There was, doubtless, a rising ground, and it commanded a view, though by no means answering the florid description of Celeste. I saw some towers, which my companion pointed out as belonging to the monastery of Chateaubriand; I could also distinguish a few distant objects rising above the interminable line of wood, which might be either the spires of churches or a few naked poplars; but nothing, as I have said, to answer my raised expectation.

Charles had gone out again with our host. During his absence and that of Celeste, I had enjoyed, with Clotilde, a confidential *tête-à-tête*—our first since we left the shores of England. I took advantage of the propitious opportunity to urge her on a subject so necessary to her peace, as that of having some explanations with Charles. I spoke of the cruelty to him, the injustice to herself, of perseverance in such heartless reserve; and I ventured to suggest the expedient of laying all her perplexities before the archbishop of the diocese, so soon as we should arrive at St. Aubin, which would at once place her under respectable, and I hoped, generous protection. She did not reject this idea, but rather seemed inclined to adopt it; acknowledging that she cherished some hopes of ecclesiastic indulgence when put in possession of her estates, provided that Charles were content to make a pecuniary sacrifice. I answered for him on this point. She yielded to happier impressions: the morbid lassitude of grief, so heart-breaking to witness, gave way while we spoke; and, instead of pronouncing Derval to be the limit of her wishes, she

expressed herself rather anxious to proceed, to confer with the notary at Nantes, and go through those forms which should place in her power the rich, and, as she now gratefully termed it, the blessed bequest of her relative.

It was because this conversation proved so cheering that I wished to prolong it; but Celeste, on coming home, had interrupted us continually, and there being, therefore, no chance of pursuing our topic, I was unfortunately prevailed upon to leave the house. I say unfortunately, for all the good effects which I had augured were quite done away with in my absence. I found Clotilde, when I returned, in a most agitated state: she had been weeping abundantly, and, though affecting to appear at ease, she could not disguise that something afflicted her deeply. Nothing less dreadful than a fresh threat from Mac Cardwell occurred to me as likely to account for the change, and, extremely alarmed, I hastily inquired if she had heard any ill news, or seen any one since I went out.

She colored, and said that she had not seen any one except her own maid; that she had heard nothing new. 'But the blessed hopes,' she added, 'imparted by you—the consolation afforded me while hearing you speak—forsook me when deprived of your presence. Some recollections of Pendyffryn, accidentally renewed, have brought to mind all those bitter realities which render me the most wretched of mortals. Oh, my sweet Marie! think not harshly of your sister! Condemn her not for submitting to a power more influential than friendship! Your church, less strict than mine, imposes no self-denials, uses no mysteries. We may not argue on the merits or demerits of either: but the day is at hand when all shall be made plain, when the moral use or abuse of Protestant indulgences, or of Roman Catholic restrictions, shall be rewarded or punished according to their performance; when every secret shall be revealed; when we shall stand face to face: then, and not till then, shall the husband of my choice, and the sister of my affections, be able to judge, without prejudice, of a heart, which, except in what concerns my religious safety, has not a feeling or a thought separated from them. Is it too much to hope, after an intimacy of several years, that your judgment may be deferred until then?'

'Alas! my dear Clotilde, I have no right to judge: I have no right whatever to condemn. But I cannot help my thoughts.

I cannot but think that those who yield to the sophistries which recommend concealment subject themselves to the dominion of the father of lies, and peril not only their peace of mind, and their honor in this present life, but their eternal happiness hereafter. I do believe that doubts and fears—images undefined and dreadful—must intercept their bewildered path, and contract their misty horizon day by day, until at length it closes in upon them in everlasting darkness. And, if the pit-falls that obstruct that path—if the deep chasms which you fear to cross alone, have not one gleam of light—if you trust implicitly to the guidance of a mortal hand, and that hand should fail, *if it should be false*, even mistaken, where, oh! where is your safety? Do such questions never occur to yourself? Do you never long for that lamp which burns everlastingly? which owes nothing to the devices of man; but which, clear as the unclouded sunbeam, and lit by the hand of Truth, is sufficient of itself to guide the pilgrim to his final rest, either through the trackless desert, or on the crowded highway?’

She endeavored to reply without betraying that she was moved; but the tremulous tone that counteracted her efforts, and in which she vindicated her motives and her religion, created in my mind the deepest sympathy; and never did I feel more thorough pity for her delusion than at the moment when that delusion disappointed me most.

It was *meagre* day; and she begged of me to excuse her appearance at dinner. ‘Charles will return late as he did yesterday,’ she added, ‘and, after a long morning’s exercise, feel well inclined for his dinner. I am fatigued already, and should prefer lying down. Besides, the abstinence that it is necessary for me to practise renders him uneasy and increases the disgust which he feels toward my religion. I am also a restraint. You are thinking of me; so afraid, in my presence, of saying anything that seems pointed. In short, my dear Mary, your brother and yourself are happier alone.’

‘Oh, my sweet sister, what a miserable feeling! how unjust to the friends whose happiness, whose enjoyment, whose every comfort depend upon you; who can feel no peace if separated from the dear object of their tenderest solicitude!’

‘Whatever I do, however I may act,’ she replied, while tears ran down her face, ‘believe me, trust me, that your

happiness, your peace, and that of my most dear Charles, guide every thought and stimulate every action. But we must wait the answer from Paris. I have written again, and may hear perhaps soon. Give your brother my love. Tell him that I am not very well, nor fit for society this evening, but shall be ready as early as he pleases in the morning. And do you, dearest Mary, meet him with a happier face, so that he may not dread a return to his own domestic circle. William will amuse him after he has dined: good night."

I saw, by her manner, that she was determined, and only begged to bring her some fruit and a little wine, entreating she would remember the fatigue of to-morrow.

'Well, be it so,' she said; 'but bring them now; for I have many exercises to perform this evening, and wish to be interrupted no more.'

I went to the next room and called for some fruit. Charles came in, and I delivered her message. He took the plate out of my hand, poured out some wine, and said, 'I suppose we must subscribe to her wishes? This I know is a fast-day. The carriage is repaired; I will go and tell her so myself.'

When he returned his face was overcast, but, though serious, it was not severe. 'I have bid her good-night,' he said, 'She begs not to be disturbed, but has ordered her breakfast at daylight. 'It is some comfort that she appears anxious to prosecute this journey and to take possession of her estates. Perhaps this French acquisition is one cause of our present estrangement: she may be undergoing a penance, which, were she not rich, might never have been thought of. The property in question is exclusively her own. If it might purchase back our happiness, how well should I think it disposed of!'

Dinner was served, and with the dessert Celeste, as usual, brought us the child, who was just beginning to stand: she had purchased, at Rennes, those long ribbons which French nurses attach to infants like bridles, in order to assist them in walking. He came into the room highly delighted with his finery. Charles suffered him to be indulged for the present, but disapproving of the system, a warm argument ensued, especially between Celeste and Catherine, who, having assisted in arranging the ribbons, defended their utility. There was very animated talking, and some laughter at poor little William's

tumbling essays. My heart smote me that such sounds should reach the ear of the solitary recluse, and realise the suspicion that her presence imposed a restraint. I therefore got rid of the women, and divesting the child of his bridle-rein, placed him on the knee of his papa.

We strictly obeyed the injunctions of Clotilde, and refrained from disturbing her. When Celeste came again she told us that her lady had retired to bed, had bolted her door, and desired to be called at daybreak. We each took our book, read for some time, and separated early.

I forgot to mention that my maid, having taken fright at the last moment or perhaps not liking to part from her friends, had disappointed me, just as we were leaving Pendyffryn. As I could not hear of another on such short notice, I was under the necessity of doing without until our arrival at Nantes, where there could be no great difficulty in supplying her place. A family, about that time leaving Tours, had promised to transfer some of their household, with an experienced nurse for Clotilde, to the Château de St. Aubin. Therefore our travelling suite consisted only of Celeste, with my brother's servant and footman. Since our arrival at Derval, Louise had exclusively waited upon me, and proved herself remarkably obliging. As she this night performed the little offices of the toilette, and lingered in my room, seemingly unwilling to leave it, I thought that, though a more experienced attendant might be found at Nantes, none more pleasing or intelligent could possibly offer, and I made her the proposal at once.

The sparkling of her bright eyes corroborated the ready consent, which, as far as she could answer for herself, my offer received. 'But, I must speak to my mother,' she added, 'before she goes to bed.' And off flew the animated girl like a bird on the wing, promising to return immediately.

But half an hour elapsed before she again made her appearance, and then with looks as downcast as they had before been glad. Her father would have consented, as he knew the Château de St. Aubin, and had one or two relations in that neighborhood, but her mother was obdurate. She would not comply. I was certainly disappointed, and told her so.

She suggested that I should speak to her mother myself; adding, 'you will not, I am sure, be ungenerous to me;

you will not wish to change my religion, nor prohibit my seeing a Confessor, whenever it is needful.'

I assured her that Protestants were very indulgent in such matters; that in my country she should have liberty of conscience to the fullest extent, and access to a priest whenever she pleased; but that, if her mother imagined I was not to be trusted, she had much better give up the point. Indeed, the fears already expressed had opened my eyes; I recollected how much happier for myself it would be to procure a protestant attendant, and therefore, upon further consideration, declined receiving her in that capacity. Louise was exceedingly mortified, and, by way of apologising for her mother and softening down what she had said, instanced the melancholy situation of *Miladi*, who was remarked to be as *triste* as the Chevalier was reserved.

I replied, that no husband could be more indulgent; that Lady Trevillion had her own place of worship, a private chapel in the house, a Confessor whenever she pleased, a Roman Catholic maid, and as much money as ever she wished for, to spend in whatever manner she liked.

Louise looked surprised, though not incredulous. She believed what I told her; but inquired, 'If such was the case, why Madame was always so discontented?'

I replied that at present she was undergoing a penance, which rendered her unhappy; that it was no ways attributable to any severity on the part of her husband, who most anxiously desired to have it removed, and who never contradicted her wishes.

'Then why is Madame not allowed to see her Confessor? Why not receive him in the house?'

'She is never prevented,' I said, rather surprised at the question.

'We thought she was prevented,' returned Louise; 'because, if Monsieur did not object to the priest coming here, there would be no occasion for Madame to go out.'

'I cannot understand you, Louise! Surely no priest has been here?'

'Not nearer than the cherry orchard, where *Miladi* went to meet him while you were at dinner. Ah! I have done wrong; I see you are displeased. Santa Maria! what will become of me? Indeed, Mademoiselle, I concluded you must know. I thought that it was only of her husband Madame was afraid—that you were her friend.'

'Madame does nothing but what we approve,' I replied, struggling with my fears, which were immediately aroused. 'She might have received such a visitor in the house if she liked; no one has more liberty. But, as there is only one sitting room, and that we were at dinner, she preferred, I suppose, a short walk in the orchard. Celeste, of course, attended her lady?'

'Oh, no. Mademoiselle Celeste remained with the *petit*: she was putting him to bed. Madame went out alone. No person saw her but my father.' The postillion met a priest close by the orchard. We are not sure, we only suppose that he waited there for Madame.'

'Most likely you are wrong; most likely she did not walk beyond the garden.'

'Ah, Mademoiselle, how can I tell. It was only when speaking to my parents of your kind offer that they mentioned the circumstance. Indeed, we all grieve for the beautiful lady; I am sure she came back soon; I am sure she meant no harm. It was only a priest; most likely one of the poor mendicant friars from Chateaubriand. They have no provision there, only the bare shelter of a roof; and Miladi is rich.'

'Yes, Louise; and very humane. Good night, and remember to call me as you have promised.'

Poor girl, her eyes were fixed on my face; she saw that her communication gave pain, and, seizing my hand, she entreated my pardon, prayed me not to betray Madame to the Chevalier—of whom the whole family seemed to think unfavorably—and then, though with evident reluctance, she left me to myself.

It was, indeed, a relief to be freed from observation. Yet mine was a solitude not to be envied; I could not separate the idea of Mac Cardwell from everything that afflicted Clotilde. The secret appointment of the evening, the melancholy change wrought in her during my short absence of the morning, could not be otherwise accounted for than in connection with that dangerous man; and I took myself severely to task for not having immediately disclosed to Charles my detection of Doughty under his extraordinary disguise. He might, and surely would, have taken measures to prevent a collision with Mac Cardwell. He might have discovered if the latter was really at St. Malo,

the protector and guide of the *ci-devant* postmaster. Alas ! it was now too late. I could only regret that mistaken fears had prompted procrastination ; however, I made up my mind not to lose a moment—either early next morning, or as soon as we should reach Nantes, where we should have assistance, if necessary, from the British Consul—in revealing everything I knew to my brother.

Impatient to leave Derval I watched the first dawn of day, and hearkened to the first movement in the house with sleepless anxiety. Louise was punctual to the hour ; and it will be long ere the impression of that hour, when light first broke over the forest of Chateaubriand, is effaced from my remembrance. A beautiful sunrise shed its bright beams upon the retired village, on the autumnal foliage, and mellow orchards rich in golden fruit, and cheered the early wakefulness of happy industry, as the abundant farm-yard was once more filled by busy looks and gladsome voices.

While the obliging Louise busied herself in packing up my dressing-case, I saw from my window the two carriages drawn out, with their imperials already strapped on. She also saw them, and sighed.

‘It cannot be helped, Mademoiselle ; but, if my father should go towards La Valière, will you permit me to inquire for your health at the Château de St. Aubin ?’

‘Most willingly,’ I replied. ‘We shall rejoice to see you there, and to return some of the kindness received in this place.’

The grateful girl expressed her thanks and her regrets in a manner that brought tears into my eyes. But, ere she ceased to speak, a noise in the passage alarmed us both. There was a loud exclamation, a violent knocking, the cry of a child, and a scream from Celeste which rang through the house.

We rushed to the door ; and were met by my brother, whose flashing eyes, ghastly looks, and passionate expressions left nothing for conjecture. Clotilde, the unfortunate Clotilde, could nowhere be found ! Her door stood open—it had just been forced ; but she was not in her chamber, nor had she been throughout the night—at least not from the hour when every one else had retired to rest—for both landlord and landlady assured us, on their honor, that no human person could get

in or out of the house after their doors and windows were secured for the night. My fears pointed to Mac Cardwell; my suspicions of connivance to Celeste. I recollected many circumstances in her manner the preceding day—the forcing me out, the remarkable change in her unfortunate lady; and, taking Charles aside, I acquainted him with every circumstance. He had briefly questioned her in the first moment of his agony; but she had protested innocence in such violent terms as, for the present, silenced inquiry.

We now sought her together, and renewed these inquiries. She had returned to the nursery, and was endeavoring to pacify William, who, frightened by the uproar, was calling out bitterly for his mamma.

‘Woman!’ exclaimed Charles, snatching his child from her arms, and placing him in mine, ‘I am not to be deceived by your untruths! I am aware that, in your opinion, to lie for the good of your church is not to sin; but, if liberty be dear to you, if you value earthly comfort, confess what you know of Lady Trevillion! If imprisonment and punishment are your choice, persist in your denials, and I shall instantly send you to Nantes, where the utmost rigor of the law shall force a late confession of those mysterious proceedings to which you are privy. The police are without; there is not a moment to lose!’

She screamed louder than before, and repeated her denials with redoubled violence. It was dreadful to hear the denunciations she drew down on herself; most dreadful to disbelieve and contradict her, yet impossible to give her credit for sincerity. Charles persevered in his threats, I in my entreaties, but all without effect; until at length, to get rid of us, she pretended suddenly to recollect having seen a mendicant friar about the house yesterday. She believed he had sent up a petition, and received some money in return. She added, that it was after this occurrence she had seen Lady Trevillion reading a letter, and weeping very much; but that, not daring to make any observations, she could only conclude that, as her writing-box was open, the letter must have been one of old date.

Catherine, when called upon, rather corroborated the truth of Celeste by saying that she was the person to whom a mendicant

friar had intrusted his petition, and that Lady Trevillion had given her a few francs with the petition, which she had returned; but that, to the best of her belief, there was no letter, or other paper, along with it.

The postillion, who observed a priest to hover about the house and to enter the orchard after nightfall, was examined again and again. He could only repeat the same story, and describe the person of the priest, who was not a mendicant, he said, either in dress or appearance, being ruddy in the complexion, rather corpulent, and very differently clad from the begging fraternity that haunted Chateaubriand. He wore over his shoulders a large clerical cloak, and carried a similar one on his arm.

To give any idea of the confusion, the noise, the curiosity with which we were surrounded, would be totally impossible. Every one asking questions; every one talking at the same time; every one giving a different opinion; some offering advice—all, evidently, more inclined to pity than to blame the interesting fugitive.

I flew back to her chamber, and carefully examined her things. The scrutiny convinced me that she meant, when she went out, to return; her watch, wound up at the usual hour, was left on the night-table; her writing-box was unlocked; I found there her purse, together with an unfinished letter intended for the Père Montcalm; another letter directed, but not sealed, for Mr. Austin, and beside them lay two addressed to herself.

Calling my brother into the room, and closing the door, I immediately committed these letters to him. I wished, for her sake, that he should read them; I was not afraid that her thoughts on the subject of her correspondence with these Confessors should be made known. The one to Mr. Austin, which he eagerly read, was a repetition of former entreaties; she implored leave to be explicit with her husband—she expressed her firm reliance on the generosity of the latter in allowing her the free disposal of money, if money could, as she seemed to expect, purchase a mitigation of the punishment she suffered, or reverse the dreadful sentence of separation.

That to the Père Montcalm was a still more urgent appeal to his feelings. It described, in warmer terms, the misery she

endured in so cruel an estrangement from her nearest and most beloved friends. It reverted more openly to the accusations of Mac Cardwell—his charge of an assault at the hands of her husband—and the circumstances attending his trial! In short, that letter expressed enough to corroborate all I repeated to my brother of Clotilde's explanations to myself, and by referring to the frightful subject of the anathemas pronounced against him, explained the cruel cause of her avoidance, her penances, her silence—all those suspicious mysteries which had justly called forth his displeasure and awakened his jealousy. The two letters addressed to Clotilde were from the Père Montcalm; they afforded proof of her innocence, and served as a balm to the lacerated heart of her husband. But they filled us both with fourfold resentment of her injuries, and fourfold indignation against the authors of her wrongs. Charging me to preserve those precious letters as I would my life, he placed her watch in his bosom, and hastened again into the midst of that vociferous crowd, from whom he demanded a guide to the nearest *dépôt* of police.

Two or three of those mounted *gens d'armes* whom we so frequently met on the roads, immediately offered their services, and made no difficulty of being able to recover the lady, unless, indeed, she were in the hands of the Jesuits; at which supposition some of the bystanders shrugged their shoulders or shook their heads, and others shrunk off, as if fearful of compromising their safety.

I spent that wretched morning wandering about with William in my arms, whom I never lost sight of, followed by the kind-hearted Louise, and endeavoring to trace those dear footsteps in the orchard whose impression had so mysteriously forsaken our path. But the ground was crisp and dry—not a vestige was there, even of a footfall much heavier than hers. At length on a cross country road, half an English mile south of Derval, we discovered the track of a two-wheeled carriage, which had turned round and gone back, without coming on to the village. This appeared somewhat unaccountable, and, in our case, rather suspicious. There was no house within miles, except that we had just come from, or the old château and monastery of Chateaubriand; yet this two-wheeled carriage had stopped short of both, and retraced its route within the last few hours.

I should not, perhaps, have attached so much importance to the circumstances but that Louise, with her local knowledge, seemed to consider it so strange. And as all agreed that the track was that of a two-wheeled calashe, I offered tempting rewards to whoever would pursue it.

Three young men set off at a very brisk pace. At midnight they came back, saying, they had traced the carriage about four leagues south-east of Derval, but that at the junction of three roads every vestige was lost, for at that point there were intersections of various descriptions in the deep muddy thoroughfare.

Vague and hopeless as was this statement, Charles, who had just returned but could not rest, set out again, taking with him one of the young men. His search, as might have been expected, threw no light on our darkness, neither did the persevering efforts of the three following days. At the end of that time, accompanied by me, our poor motherless child, and the suspected Celeste, he proceeded to Nantes. It had been his intention at first to part with this woman, but, on consideration, was persuaded that it might for the present be more prudent to retain her.

CHAPTER XVII.

AT Nantes, as elsewhere, disappointment awaited us, though aided in our efforts by the zealous exertions of the British Consul, and the apparent assistance of the late Monsieur de St. Aubin's man of business. This person could give no information respecting the next heirs of his client. He had been lately employed, but understood that the family, who were dispersed in the late Revolution, had none of them returned to the neighborhood—excepting only the proprietor of the estates bequeathed to Clotilde—and he had purchased back, in the commencement of Napoleon's first consulship, the Château de St. Aubin from an extravagant liberal.

Charles, in despair, brought himself to address Mr. Austin. I copied the letters found after the loss of his unfortunate wife, and enclosed them with her melancholy history to the Père Montcalm. From him, in a few days, we received the most affecting reply, expressive of grief, which I am sure was sincere, but assuring us of his total inability to form a conjecture on so inexplicable a subject. He concluded by referring us to the civil authorities at Nantes and recommending the aid of the police.

Having waited for this letter, and put every possible inquiry in train, we next prepared for an investigation in the neighborhood of La Valière—Charles still building some hope on the coöperation, if he could find them, of Clotilde's male relatives.

Believing our misery incapable of augmentation, we little dreamt that a blow, full as heavy as the last, was ready to fall on our heads. Never, for one moment, since the loss of his mother, had William been left to the sole care of Celeste, whom I still regarded as an object of distrust, although she was retained

as a matter of prudence. He slept in my room and partook of our meals. We had no other comfort but keeping him in sight. Unhappily, while the carriage was preparing for our journey, I walked into the town to buy him some *bonbons*. Celeste had been directed to a shop on the quay, and thither we proceeded at a very smart pace, unconscious that, from the moment of leaving the *hôtel*, we had been followed by two men who kept us within sight. While standing in the shop, a crowd collected without, sufficiently dense to prevent our egress, the object of curiosity being a mountebank followed by persons of the lowest description.

Celeste, who carried William, kept close by my side, and after a few attempts to pass, for we were rather pressed for time, some amongst the crowd opened us a passage. But, before we could get through, it was closed in again, and I found myself rudely impeded—a rather unusual occurrence in France. Suddenly Celeste uttered a scream. As suddenly the child was snatched from her arms. They were some paces in advance. I saw him borne off: I saw her (apparently frantic) pursue him: while, in my equally frantic endeavors to follow, I was nearly crushed to death by the pressure.

The cries that I uttered might have raised the whole town. Alas! they brought me no aid, but only increased my perplexities, for more people collecting, barred up every passage. At length, some *gens d'armes* came to my rescue, dispersed the curious mob, and, securing me a shelter, ran hither and thither in search of the child.

How I got to the *hôtel*—how I told Charles what had happened—is out of my power to explain, for much that must have passed has escaped my recollection. But I know that a number of persons surrounded me; that my unfortunate brother rushed out like a madman; that I was carried to bed, and a draught forced down my throat. The draught produced stupor, which the surgeon called sleep. But, what, oh! what an awakening was mine! The large silent apartment; the startling remembrance, so confused, yet so convincing—so vague, yet so true! The frightful particulars recurring by degrees! The well-defined scene! I was well nigh deprived of my reason; but weak and subdued, like a new-born baby, I had scarcely strength to ask a question of two severe-looking women who sate by my couch. One bade

me be quiet; another ran for the doctor, who came, felt my pulse, and gave me more medicine, which lulled me again. During this state the poor distracted father was differently occupied. Never one moment at rest, his search was incessant. There was nothing left undone: no means untried. Advertisements were sent to all the provincial towns; hand-bills were posted up; immense rewards offered: but all failed to elicit the slightest information. We were not, however, without anonymous hints, or very bold attempts to obtain the reward. But I need not now enlarge on these harassing details, or the dreadful alternations of hope and despair to which for many months we were subjected. Action of any kind was, however, essential to the mind's health of both; for, as to rest or inactivity, the first was impossible, and in the second there was madness.

At one time we followed a vessel from Nantes to Bourdeaux, missed her there, and proceeded to Marseilles. But, though a woman and child were really on board, they proved to be a soldier's wife, with a female baby in her arms, no way answering the description of Celeste and our William. Again, we actually thought we had found him in Picardy, where, owing to the extreme heat and hurry of a journey in April, I was laid up with a fever. Meanwhile there had been a reply from Mr. Austin, very long delayed, and equally as unsatisfactory as every other application; but written, as he conversed, in the most dignified language, and calculated by the seeming candor of its style, and the sympathy with which he expressed himself, to deceive persons less well read in his character than ourselves. He strongly advised our seeking for Mac Cardwell at Rome, and deprecated the severity that had led to such painful results. But so far were we from taking his advice that, although at Charles's own suggestion we had contemplated a journey to Rome, the idea was at once abandoned when the Confessor proposed it.

One circumstance connected with this letter I must not omit, as it made a very deep impression on Charles. Though dated Morvyn Park, and bearing the English post-mark, the paper on which Austin wrote was of French manufacture; and, about the time of its reaching us, we heard from Doctor Bentley, in answer to our inquiries, that the Confessor was neither at Bath nor at Morvyn Park.

It was now late in May; we had been led here and there by various delusions—we had gone again to La Valière—remained three days in the neighborhood of the Château de St. Aubin—revisited Derval—seen the Notary at Nantes. But neither offered reward nor threatened punishment had any effect except, in one or two instances, to lead us astray, the fate of mother and child remaining as darkly enigmatical as ever.

Up to this time my poor unhappy brother had been sustained by the restless activity of hopes, which, however vague, still served to lead him on. But extreme fatigue, and as extreme mental excitement, overcame in the end his natural strength, he gave way all at once; and bodily ailment benumbed for a time the acuteness of his feelings. When the fever subsided, and that he at length arose from his bed, it was in so subdued a state of mind as I feared must have ended in melancholy madness. But renovation of bodily strength promoted by degrees mental recovery, not to a softened or tender submission, but to a silent, severe contemplation of his miseries—a closing, as it were, of the heart to all consolation—a stern avoidance of every subject connected with Clotilde or his child.

In the course of his illness, which lasted a considerable time, I again addressed a letter to the Père Montcalm, entreating once more his interference with the higher powers of his church in the recovery of my sister or her son. But my renewed appeal produced only a repetition of his good wishes, his sincere commiseration, and sorrow that neither his nor our inquiries had been attended with success, and assurances that he had no influence whatever with the powers to which I referred.

Failing with the Père Montcalm, my wishes recurred to a project long thought of; and as soon as Charles was sufficiently recovered to bear a removal from Lyons to Tours, where he proposed spending the winter, I took courage to break that cruel reserve which he had imposed upon our conversation, by suggesting an application to the Archbishop of the Diocese, whose extensive jurisdiction embraced more than the theatre of our calamities. Alas! the answer that he made penetrated my heart. It robbed me of my only consolation, the assurance I had till then felt that his love for Clotilde and his confidence in her innocence were unchanged.

‘If,’ he said, ‘by laying myself at the feet of every Roman

Catholic prelate in Europe, one trace of my innocent child might be discovered, I would perform a pilgrimage from diocese to diocese, not only through France, but Italy, with more devotion and sincerity than the most bigoted devotee since the days of the Crusade. But as for her!—do you believe, that if her flight was compulsory, she would not long since have found means of escape, at least some means of communication? Women are not destitute of expedients—French women especially—and she who could deceive affection such as ours, if equally well inclined, could as easily elude the vigilance of those she disliked. When we recollect that she is rich, and of course influential, can we believe her without some freedom of will? And, as for those letters that deceived me at first, might they not have been purposely left in her writing desk? The preservation of a copy—so called—is no proof that there was an original. Or, if there had been, does that acquit her of taking into confidence the designing Celeste, or of keeping up a correspondence with the vilest of men, whose aim and end has been to render her husband obnoxious? Be assured, Mary, that every act of that last scene was premeditated; that she knew Doughty sailed with us; that Mac Cardwell was in waiting at St. Malo; that Austin, the insidious intellectual Austin! was also about to leave England. Reflect on what has passed, coolly, dispassionately, as I have learnt to reflect, and all is accounted for; all but the last, the greatest misfortune of my life, the cruel bereavement of my child, which baffles elucidation.'

I had imagined until now that my cup of bitterness was drained to the dregs; for, throughout, he had professed himself as if thoroughly relying on the innocence of Clotilde, and always spoke of her as the victim, not the accomplice, of her Confessors. His change of opinion cut me to the heart: it roused me to defend her: I forgot his reserve, the renewal of that severity, which always threw me to a distance, and I expressed, with all the warmth of affection and pity, my perfect conviction of her integrity and worth. But, rising from his seat, he silenced me at once.

'This is a subject, Mary, that must never recur between us. If it is impossible to refrain from it, we had better part; and, indeed, it is right that your former engagements should be fulfilled. I do not desire that you should make so great a sacri-

fice for me. Write to Major Melville: let me place you under his protection, and then retire with my misfortunes to the solitude they court.'

'No, Charles, I have relinquished those engagements, and gave them up willingly, without reference to you. A broken spirit and a cheerless heart would ill requite the disinterested attachment of Major Melville. He, I hope, may find his happiness elsewhere, with one who can give him her undivided thoughts, as well as a heart free of anxiety. I would not obtrude my cares and disappointments into that peaceful family for all the world.'

'Well, then,' he resumed, 'we must e'en perform our pilgrimage together, but on condition that you never revert to the subject of this day—that a name once so dear, but now so dishonored, be never mentioned between us.'

I had no choice but submission. After sojourning at Tours a few months we proceeded to Germany, where a circumstance occurred which obliged Charles to remove his unnatural interdict, which dispelled his assumed apathy, renewed his anxieties, filled me with hopes, and sent us once more to Nantes on an errand of disappointment.

It was at Weisbaden that he received a letter from the law-agent of the St. Aubin estates to say that an order had been forwarded to him, from Lady Trevillion, making over the rents of those estates to Monsieur Augustine de St. Aubin, the next heir at law. He added that the deed of assignment was legally executed, every proper form having been gone through, and delivered by Clotilde Trevillion née de Montmorency, at the Hôtel de Rue St. Thomas, Paris; that it was witnessed by the master of the hôtel, and one other respectable housekeeper, on the second day of the preceding April.

It was now late in August; the letter had been written in May, and directed in so confused a manner that I only wonder it reached us at all. On the very day of its receipt we set off for Nantes—my brother's renewed vigor being more than commensurate with the apathy of months. But this journey, like all others preceding it, might have been spared; for the notary had no more information to impart than that which was contained in his letter. The deed of assignment was put into our hands, and we immediately recognized the signature

of our unfortunate lost one. It seemed, for the moment, to realise that loved presence; it renewed all our anguish; it brought back, as if they had occurred but that moment, the bitter scenes of the last miserable year. We hurried from Nantes, and once more pursued the road to Paris.

But the banker at Paris was as little satisfactory as the notary at Nantes. He denied having any knowledge of the St. Aubin affairs, but recollected Lady Trevillion coming to his house and signing an acquittance for money. She received a sum then in hand, and was accompanied by two persons—one appeared to be a legal, the other a clerical, friend. Since that period he had honored the drafts of Augustine de St. Aubin, with whose person, as well as whose residence, he was unacquainted. Mr. de St. Aubin was now the receiver of the rents, forwarded to the bank by the steward at the Château de St. Aubin.

We went to the hôtel in the Rue St. Thomas, but found that the person who had signed as a witness was gone to some town in the south. Our inquiries for the respectable house-keeper in the Fauxbourg St. Martin were equally unsuccessful: no person inhabiting the house recollected such a name. It was, however, a sort of habitation which admitted many lodgers, and he might have lived there at the time.

I saw the Père Montcalm, a venerable, and to all appearance kindly, old man, who received me as the friend of a favorite daughter, but who, alas! was as ignorant of Lady Trevillion's fate as myself; nor could I—even with my experience of Roman Catholic evasion—distrust his sincerity when he assured me, tears streaming down his face, that he knew not, until that moment, how near Clotilde had been to him. But age had benumbed his faculties and weakened his mind. I saw that there was little to expect either from his services or the duration of his life.

By the middle of December we were once more settled at Tours. Charles clung to that locality, and prosecuted his inquiries for William.

Another winter having passed, and another spring going by, he no longer hopes anything in France, but begins to speak of searching for Mac Cardwell at Rome: should we fail there as here, he will not, I fear, return to England. I have thrown

these few particulars together with the hope of interesting those dear friends who are still interested for me, in the fate of a sister whom I shall never cease to love, and of whose vindication I can never let myself despair: upon their affection I cast myself—they will receive and candidly examine the statements I have made. They will not refuse the last request of an unwilling exile, who entreats that they will prosecute that search, which, were she to remain at home, would be the occupation of her life. They will not hesitate to correspond with a few persons in France who are employed in this service, and, should any information be received, to investigate it fully. And oh! should the injured fugitive be found, they will not reject her, nor close the gates of mercy on her returning steps. They will remember that she is the wife of Sir Charles Trevillion—the mother of his son—the sister of a suppliant who depends solely on their aid.

Charles has lately talked of hiring a vessel and cruising about the Mediterranean. Sometimes he proposes a journey through Egypt and Palestine: his thoughts return towards the East—not to the scene of his military existence, not to European India—for all that leads to individual retrospect lacerates his heart. But he yearns for something never seen before, something to carry him quite beyond self. He wishes to explore those desolate regions where the voice of eternal justice is not drowned in the noisy din of worldly excitement; where pure and primitive religion needs neither artificial proofs nor costly varnishings to mark the rise and progress of its orient light. He detests the arts, the luxuries, the refinements on which he used to set a value, and he pines to behold a scene where their ruin is perfected—where the depopulated city and the trackless waste witness the punishment of sin equally with its gracious atonement. He longs to contemplate a patriarchal state of existence—the sacred locale of a first people, who pitched their tents in the wilderness, and worshipped God beneath the canopy of the heavens. Books hitherto creating little interest are resorted to for information. He selects those which treat of the countries where he means to travel. Biblical history becomes a pursuit—not as it was pursued at Bath, for the purposes of theological research—but for the purpose of informing his mind, which, till a wish to explore in person the scenes

there described, was sunk in deplorable sadness. Now, carried so far back from the subjects of his grief, he lives in a different atmosphere, and forgets individual misery in meditating on the desolation of nations.

His thoughts become more elevated, his feelings are softened; and this is an improvement which, with his present occupations, is sure to progress. Every object in these Roman Catholic countries reminds him of his wrongs, and the great alterations in England exclude forgetfulness there. Shall I, then, regret leaving the territories of a church where those wrongs are ever objective, are always present?—of a church—that holy fane which should be a refuge from oppression, an asylum for the broken in heart, but which superstition, idolatry, and priest-craft have robbed of its consolations, or changed into the rallying point of the despoiler—whence issues, instead of peace, the war-cry of persecution and blood? Oh, no! we must fly these heart-rending witnesses, these costly adornings, these artificial pomps, beneath which the seven hills of Rome hide their modern deformities. We require a more primitive country, a less luxurious hot-bed, where religion was first modelled by the hand of its incarnate Founder; we must seek a land where, apart from interruption, we shall contemplate at leisure, amidst the destruction of empires, a union of mercy with justice, and learn to hate sin, not in the person of the sinner, not because we ourselves have suffered from its inflictions, but because it demanded an expiation at once so gracious and so agonising.

Looking to our exile in such a light as this, I endeavor to subdue the regrets which would bind me to home, and I remember that, however separated by distance from those we most love, the communion of hearts must remain. Even should the country of my choice, and the friends of my youth, never more bless me by their presence in this world, the hour is not distant when we must all meet again, when our affections and our lives must be renewed.

We go to Paris *en route* towards Rome; and this manuscript, written at different periods, I mean to leave with our banker, directed to Major Melville, and enclosed to our kind aunt, at Heathery Haugh. She will deliver it; and she will, I know, assist in removing whatever prejudices may remain. You will read it together, my best and dearest friends. My own gentle

Lucy will feel for her absent cousin; and you, Henry—yes, I know you will forgive whatever disappointments it has been my misfortune to inflict, when you learn how severely I have suffered. Above all, you will not forget that there is another to love—another exile, who may be the most pitiable, the most innocent sufferer amongst us.

I will write from Paris to Scotland, and prepare my dear aunt Melville for the receipt of this packet from her grateful

MARY TREVILLION.

Tours, April 2nd, 18—.

CHAPTER XVIII.

[MAJOR MELVILLE IN CONTINUATION.]

SUCH was the narrative of Mary Trevillion—such the history promised me of her feelings towards one whom I had condemned as guilty and ungrateful, but whom I now acquitted of all save that palsied weakness which the Romish creed engenders, and with which it is the policy of the Romish church to strike her dupes, by inculcating, from the cradle to the grave, that salvation depends on obedience, until at length the mind loses all confidence in itself, and becomes utterly debilitated. It was this prostration of her faculties at the shrine of priestcraft that rendered Lady Trevillion the victim of a hypocritical conspiracy. Time was forgotten in the perusal of her pitiable story, and the bright sun of morning had long blushed through my crimson window-curtains ere I could have believed, but for so glowing a witness, that half the night was over.

Mary's gentle and feminine attractions had first won my admiration, and the consistency of her character and the warmth of her heart had confirmed every impression in her favor. She could not have enlisted a more zealous champion in her cause. I pledged myself never to abandon it—never to cease in aiding her benevolent researches—never to relinquish the hope of accomplishing their object. I suspected that Austin would not keep his appointment, and had merely given his address to gain time to rid himself of importunity. And, even should he meet me, what could be expected from him? Would he confess to have played the deceiver—to have leagued himself with Mac Cardwell?

Certainly not : he would guard their mutual secret ; and these two worthies would work on together, and share the estates they had, doubtless, taken every precaution to secure.

It struck me as a most propitious incident, my sudden acquaintance with Matilde, and our accidental meeting with the elderly priest, whom I had afterwards seen in company with Austin. Through means of this communicative girl I hoped to discover his retreat should he fail in his appointment ; and then would come my turn to watch his proceedings, associations, and haunts, some of which might lead to the ultimate recovery of Lady Trevillion or her son.

But such a conclusion, though easy to jump at by anticipation, might be difficult enough to arrive at in practice. A foreigner, like myself, a straight-forward soldier, was certainly no match for a thorough-bred Jesuit, with the advantage of being (at least) well acquainted with, if not a native of, a country in which I was a stranger.

To circumvent him would be difficult, perhaps impossible. No, I retract my words—not quite impossible. Where love, pity, indignation, were all enlisted on the side of justice, he could not be a man whose energies should fail him. Neither, upon longer reflection, did the ultimate discovery of either mother or child appear to be impracticable. Sir Charles might have relaxed in his efforts too soon ; Mary had, therefore, pursued hers under a disadvantage. They were both too well known ; were doubtless under ecclesiastical *surveillance*, and could not move an inch without observation. I would embark *incognito*, an unsuspected stranger. Neither at Tours, Nantes, or Derval, was I likely to be recognised—at least not as the agent of Sir Charles Trevillion. I would prosecute inquiry without creating suspicion, or placing interested persons upon their guard. Sufficient time had elapsed to lull the vigilance of even jesuitical caution, and it would be strange if zeal, application of money, and personal exertion, did not bring some reward.

But how were these exertions to be directed ? Here was the puzzle. I spoke French, it is true, as Englishmen speak it who have not lived much amongst foreigners ; yet not with sufficient fluency to make my way with the natives, or to get intimate with their customs and manners. A courier must be hired—one upon whom I could depend—neither a Frenchman nor a Roman

Catholic: here was a difficulty. But it occurred to me to consult Mary Trevillion, as her knowledge of France might smooth all difficulties.

Meanwhile the morning was wearing away; the hour of my appointment approached. A waiter, half French, half Irish, who had been very obliging since my *séjour* in the hôtel, brought up the breakfast; and, as he poured out the coffee, his good-humored smile induced me to inquire whether he knew of such a person as a trustworthy courier.

'How far do you travel, sir?' was his characteristic reply.

'I have not determined. Is it necessary I should?'

'Oh, by no manner of *manes*, sir! only the answer came natural.'

'You speak French,' I observed, 'as if you were a native.'

'My 'prenticeship to the tongue has been full eighteen years, Major. And I had a small smattering beforehand from my poor father—may pace be about him!—for, though he never would part with me while he could help it—and that was for the life—yet the good sowl gave me schooling at home; the very best he could get me at that present time. And young Father Tom, who was Father Joe's coadjutor, and is, may be, to the fore in it still, taught me between whiles what he could get me to larn; and had the run of the house for his pains. The lad had been in France, and spoke French mighty well—at least what sounded well all the way off in Ireland: so, as I liked it better than Latin, and that my own poor ould daddy knew nothing of the difference, why the tutor let me take my own choice; which was the more convenient to himself, for sorrow word of Latin could be driv into his scull, savin' the litinies and chants that he must repeat in the chapel. So, when it was my luck, as well as my betters', to be nabbed by Napoleon and pent up in Verdun, I got on like mad at the pronunciation; being, as you know, book-larned already. And that is the way I come to spake like a native.'

'So like,' I replied, 'that the first two days I was here you passed for a Frenchman.'

He bowed very low, and put another question. If the services of a courier would be required for long?

'It is impossible to say. Perhaps the business I am engaged

in may take up some time. Perhaps it may be concluded in a week or a month.'

'Then it is not to travel you want a courier, Major?'

'Really, my friend, I cannot pledge myself to anything. But, perhaps, your questions are not merely those of common curiosity? Perhaps you would like to accompany me yourself?'

'I should like to travel well enough, sir,' he replied, 'supposing it was with a gentleman who knows something of the world—a real gentleman, such as yourself, Major, and not a green-horn, as once was my fate; or rather a brace of them, reeking-hot out of Leeds, or some such place in the factory line. Och! it's myself that was sick of those chaps, and could have made an end of them again and again. They deserved a short summons for disgracing their birth-place—murdering French, and knocking English out of joint. They committed manslaughter with their tongues every minute of the day; and, what was twenty times worse, I being their courier came in for my share of the ridicule.'

'I should have thought such a service very amusing, and have joined in the laugh they raised.'

'So I did, with a vengeance, after leaving them at Geneva, where they were provided with one in my place; for by the time we got there, I could stand it no longer, with their "*Alley vows song*;" and their "*Venice, I say*;" calling all the waiters names, and the kitchen their *cousin*. But that's neither here nor there, nor to your purpose, sir, at this present time—so, to make a long story short, summer is coming, and I should like a few months' touring, uncommonly.'

I had been all along pleased with the appearance and manners of this good-natured Irishman, the best exile of his grade and country that I ever happened to meet. Shrewd, intelligent, and obliging; he was frank without impertinence, and civil without obsequiousness. I could not but suspect that he had known better days, and had bought his experience with the loss of his fortune. But, though probably fallen from a more respectable station, there was no false shame, no mean pride which interfered with his duty; and the hilarity of his disposition, and unvarying cheerfulness of his manners, were to me the best proofs of a conscience unseared. A man may be exempt from calamity, yet dull and dissatisfied, and many lack contentment who lack nothing else; but it is ever my opinion that good temper and good spirits are at least the

guarantees of a heart 'void of offence'; and I felt as if some of my difficulties were got over when my guide offered to engage himself as my courier.

The Confessor failed, as I thought he would, in keeping his appointment. The house at which he gave his address had not had a clerical inhabitant for several months. I could not bring myself to carry a disappointment so directly to Mary Trevillion; and, as my only resource seemed to rest with Matilde, I walked slowly on to her abode. But when I reached it she had gone out, and the person who answered me I conjectured to be her father, from the circumstance of his having one arm tied up. He eyed me, as I inquired for his daughter, with such keen curiosity, that instead of appointing an hour to look at his paintings, which had been my intention, I affected indifference, and hastened away without leaving my name, but much mortified at missing Matilde. The very next minute, however, I was amply rewarded by catching a glimpse of the identical being whom I so eagerly sought. Just as I was turning out of the street Austin turned in. We were at different corners: he walked fast, and held down his head; I retraced my steps unobserved, and saw him actually enter the door through which I had just made my exit.

This was enough; I now knew one of his haunts, and, glad to escape recognition, proceeded forthwith to see Mary Trevillion, much better pleased than had he kept his appointment, and anxious to consult with her as to future proceedings. Sir Charles and his sister were gone for the day to St. Cloud; and I own that the not finding her at home rendered me rather impatient. I wished to consult with her before going farther. Vigor, perseverance, and courage, I knew myself to possess; but prudence, foresight, and caution, were qualities better suited to the present occasion, and these I had to acquire. Lady Trevillion's abduction must have been effected by such a train of intrigue, falsehood, and duplicity, as might scarcely be equalled. One incautious step, one rash interrogatory, one precipitous act, might render my services abortive. It was now a matter of doubt whether I should not have forced myself upon the Confessor; for if the lodgings of the lace-mender were not also his—if he should only have called at the house on some charitable errand connected with his profession—I

might not find him again; and, if so, what an opportunity had been thrown away.

In this dilemma I thought of my courier, and determined to send him about the close of the evening to find out what he could in the Rue des Postes; where I was now fearful of returning myself. Accordingly, having reached my apartments, I rang the bell for Bourke.

'My good fellow,' I said, 'you must do me a service this evening. I have a commission to execute, and as you seem both intelligent and steady—'

'Begging your pardon, sir, for the interruption,' said Bourke, 'I never was known to deceive; and if anything about me says I am steady, the sooner that's contradicted the better, Harry Bourke being one of the wildest and the easiest led of any poor Irish exile that ever left house and home, or followed bad luck across the salt seas. As for the commission, that's another affair. I never broke faith with gentle or simple, and you are not the first to begin with.'

'May I ask, without offence, before we go farther, if you, Master Bourke, are Protestant or Papist?'

'I am a Catholic, Major. Neither better nor worse.'

'You are therefore under obligations to confess all you do to the priest.'

'In reason, sir. When I do what is wrong I go for the sake of absolution; and a very great comfort it is, bringing peace to one's soul in the form of a few words, and placing oneself once for all on a sure footing instead of wearing out life on the stool of repentance. When I'm doubtful between the wrong and the right I go to confession for information's sake; for how should ignorant mortals tell the difference between one sin and another, the great and the small, unless they inquire from those that's well experienced in the same. But, as to betray another man's secrets, or repating to the priest what is told me in confidence, why, it's a penance I'd deserve, and not an absolution for turning informer.'

'I ask pardon, Master Bourke, for making such inquiries, but my case is very peculiar.'

'No offence in life, sir. There's bad, good, false, and true in every persuasion; and it's not wholesome for any Christian to be dwelling on the dark side, thinking the worst of his

fellow-creatures. In respect of the commission, if you're not inclined to trust me *now*, there is no harm done. No offence in the world, sir.'

'I am perfectly determined to trust you; but my commission requires caution, perseverance, and zeal. Above everything silence; for 'tis of a delicate nature.'

'Ah, sir,' responded the Irishman, dropping his under jaw, and exhibiting a ludicrous expression of sympathy, while he laid his hand—French fashion—on his heart; 'I am a person of experience in such matters, and would take the freedom of advising so fine a young gentleman to go home and consort with one like himself, in his own native place. There's nothing genuine here but the brandy; and that same is false, for its own name belies its nature. Commend me to the stuff which spakes for itself: potsheen or faintosh will never deceive, and it's the same with our country women once they are married.'

I agreed with this sentiment, though not with his comparison. And then, without committing the parties by name, except Mr. Austin himself, proceeded to say that the liberty, perhaps the life, of a most amiable lady was concerned in keeping this person in view and finding out his haunts; that I had seen him to enter a particular house in the Rue des Postes, inhabited by a lace-mender, her brother, and some children; and that my present business was to discover whether he also had taken up his quarters in that house; if not, whether he was remaining in Paris, or about to depart elsewhere, and whither? I described the person of Matilde, and told him what she had told me of her story; adding that the lady was so interesting an object to me I meant to traverse all France until she was discovered.

'France is a wide place, Major Melville; but may be you have some guess as to quarters: the lady is of your own persuasion, I hope, sir.'

'She is a Roman Catholic; and we have good reason to suspect is concealed against her will by this and another Roman Catholic priest.'

'Jesuits, perhaps?' said Bourke, looking alarmed. 'Well may you say that it's a delicate business: they are dreadful to meddle with, these same Jesuits.'

'I am aware of their influence, but difficulties should not

deter an honorable man and a soldier from endeavoring to redress the oppressed. I presume you a soldier, Master Bourke; your appearance bespeaks the profession of arms.'

'An officer, with your leave,' he said, drawing himself up; 'it cost my poor father enough for the qualification, setting case I had made a good use of it. But that's nothing to the purpose at this time of day: soldiers, no more than officers, should shrink in a case of distress; and I'm not one to be frightened by those we were speaking of, though it's themselves that are to be feared. They are here, they are there,' he added, dropping his voice to a whisper, 'and no where at all, at the very same minute. Though we are speaking so low in this inner room, two stories from the ground, three feet of wall between us and the street, with the doors of the ante-room fastened, it's a wonder to me if every word is not taken down and entered against us in letters of blood. Oh, sir, it's not the words which we utter, but the words we never speak that will be reaching their ears, and rising in judgment against us. May the blessed saints be our safeguard both here and hereafter.'

'Notwithstanding so devout an aspiration, Master Bourke, I rather suspect that you are not a good Catholic?'

'I don't set up to be good; nor ever did. But, Holy Mother! it isn't goodness would save us if we cross them that's nameless, or meddle with their doings in any way at all.'

'You would rather not interfere, I see, in this business of mine. There is no liberty of choice for a Roman Catholic layman.'

'There's two sorts of liberty, Major Melville, as I know to my cost—one's all blarney and lip deep, the other is in a man's conscience; mine, the heavens be praised! is free as the wind, and at your service entirely.'

I accepted, with my usual precipitance, this very liberal offer. And enough being said to create in the warm heart of my courier a sincere zeal for my success, he would have persuaded me to take into our confidence one Father Murphy, or Father Peter, his own particular clergy—'a very decent man, and no friend at all to the Jesuits.' But I expressed, in explicit terms, my determination not to admit a third into our confidence, especially an Irish priest.

Bourke seemed to think me very silly in not enlisting so able an assistant. But added, 'There's no help for a man's feelings, only it's not wise to be throwing away luck, for every thing's ordained. If I had not been a prisoner sixteen long years' where would be the language that stands our friend now? Ah, sir, it's not right to be setting up the forethought of man in opposition to Providence, or throwing away chances that falls in one's way! and sure they're teeming down upon us now like April showers, with the sun breaking out every minute between. There's at this blessed moment, a young lady, *en première*, beautiful and good, with plenty of money: she asked me last night to find her a lace-mender. Never question chances or luck after that; her errand will furnish me with an excuse; and I'll away to the Rue des Postes in no time, where something shall be gathered from the women at least. Madame the lace-mender has a very pretty niece?'

'Yes; she is pretty, and innocent, and only just sixteen. Please to remember, Master Bourke, that thy business to the Rue des Postes has nothing to do with this young girl.'

'But sixteen!' exclaimed Bourke. 'Poor child! I might be her father. Ah, sir! the heart in my body was broke over and over before she saw the light. 'Tis I that have purchased my experience of women, and could tell you a story, only it's tedious, and over-moving for this hour of the day. I always make it a rule to postpone thinking of my troubles until business is over, and until I can find an hour's leisure for recreation, which, with bells here and *garçon* there, and *toute-de-suite* every where, very seldom falls to my lot.'

'So much the better, I should think, since your pastime is none of the most cheering.'

'Oh, sir, not so bad either; for though, as I say, the heart in my body was broke long ago, which can't be helped now, it happened through no fault of mine; and, though I am in one sense of the word a banished man, there's little weight on my mind—the Holy Virgin be praised! Once I was richer, but not an ounce lighter. Neither man, woman, nor child is worse through my means; and though there's a trifle difference between officer and waiter—between obeying your colonel and answering bells—after all, sir, it is the man who makes the profession; in short, nothing goes to my heart of what's done

but the sporting. I, that have ridden to cover twenty good miles, and been in at the death after all! Their method of hunting is not to my mind here, supposing I had time for the same, or a baste worth the crossing. But who could expect to match Norah Creina in France? You know the bog of Allen, Major, or must know it by hearsay? Well, it's that is the beautiful ground, and the Curragh of Kildare not to be matched in the world, neither a tree nor a hedge-row for fifteen good miles, except the tower of Kildare standing up in the midst of the ancient ould town for all the world like a poplar tree or a gallows: all the fire wood that they'll burn from one end of France to the other will never leave them so handsome a clearance as that. It's across the bog of Allen I used to ride poor spanking Norah—she was younger sister to Wildoats—and make nothing of joining the hounds before day break. You'll have heard of the Kildare hounds, sir? they are known through the three kingdoms, and been in at the death, as I mentioned this minute. You shall hear more of Wildoats when I come to my troubles. But sure there's no pleasure in speaking of past times at this busy hour, so I will postpone that gratification till a convenient opportunity, and be off for the Rue des Postes to engage my lace-mender for Mademoiselle Molesworth *en première*, then settle with Madame here to give me my *congé*. There is one thing in our favor I forgot to mention before, which is my knowing, as luck will have it, almost every conductor in France.'

I concluded our engagement, and inquired if he could enter my service on the morrow; 'for to say the truth, Bourke,' I added, 'you are just the person I wanted, especially as it seems you anticipate my wishes.'

'*Toute au contraire*, Monsieur, you anticipate mine. For as to travelling, it is quite to my taste. I never did good when too long in one place, and if Father Murphy were to hoist me up into Paradise to-morrow, I doubt if I should not soon be after regretting this dirty probationary world we live in. As to leaving Madame it is easy enough—she is good-natured, and it's only hiring a *garçon* ex-officio. I'll take care to see that she's honestly served. But there go the bells, my mistress's still, and here comes *le dîner*. *Tout-de-suite! chère demoiselles! tout-de-suite.*'

So saying, away flew my military *garçon*, who was especially in attendance on the English ladies upstairs; I therefore saw no more of him for several hours. Afraid to intrude on Sir Charles Trevillion, I spent my evening in reperusing the manuscript of his sister.

About ten o'clock Bourke made his appearance, looking brimful of intelligence and glowing with success; it was really surprising how well he had prospered: but I must let my trusty *courier* speak for himself.

'I am disappointed, and I am not, sir,' he said, having closed-to the door; 'Father Austin is like the fairies, no where to be found. He has been to that lodging of the lace-mender's once or twice before this morning, and came there last night after dark in a carriage, which however was left at the end of the street. Madame the lace-mender, with a young child in her arms, set off in that carriage about eleven o'clock. The child, a little girl, is a nursed one, about eighteen months old, and has been *en pension* with the lace mender since September last year. You said something to me, sir, about the disappearance of a child.'

'I did, but the boy whom I alluded to was older than you say by a year at the least. However, his poor mother, when lost to her friends, was expecting her second confinement. Estates of considerable value were lately devised her, and to her next child who should be born at the family château; should this condition not be fulfilled, the estates were to devolve, after her death, to the nearest male heir of the testator. Her child, if fairly dealt by, might be eighteen months old: altogether the coincidence is striking.'

'Why the case is as clear as the sun,' replied Bourke. 'We seem to have hit the right nail like a miracle. O! it's myself would glory to aid you! and to see the sweet babby. righted and restored, and sated in the fine ancient ould château, and those villains of kidnappers chained down in the bottomless pit, without one single *sous* to buy them a mass. May the saints be about us, and tache us to lay up for emergencies!'

Bourke had gained his information from a young man, a waiter out of place, who lodged in the Rue des Postes opposite Matilde, whom he described as crying most bitterly when placing the little girl in the carriage with her aunt. This

young man, whom Bourke promised to befriend, was to come early in the morning and bring us what news he could collect; my indefatigable courier having given him a commission to purchase some trifling drawing from Matilde's father, the *ci-devant* artist, who still made a trade of selling second-rate pictures.

I'd have gladly undertaken the same errand myself, and laid out a few pieces with the artist, but Austin most probably had his spies on my actions, and I was obliged to be prudent.

Our envoy came early in the morning: self interest had rendered him vigilant. He had some acquaintance with Monsieur André, the artist, having sold a cheap painting for him at one or two hôtels, and was slightly known to Matilde, who acted in general as nurse to the little *pensionnaire*, whom he described as a beautiful child, with a very fair complexion, and very bright blue eyes, more like an English than a French child. He said that she was never taken out into the town, but always had her walks without the *barrière*; that he never remarked the tall fine-looking priest until within the last week, when he saw him twice with Monsieur André; that the child had been nursed somewhere in La Vendée, and was brought to Paris about six months before. He also said that, to the best of his belief, the journey of Madame Bellenger was suddenly determined upon, for he had been with her brother, Monsieur André, until a late hour that evening cleaning some old picture frames, and observed no preparations. On the contrary, all the children were gone to their beds, and he believed that Matilde had repaired to hers before he left the house. That it was about eleven o'clock when he heard a carriage in the street, and saw Madame Bellenger walk towards it alone. Presently André, carrying something beneath his cloak, and Matilde crying by his side, joined Madame. André's burden proved to be the little girl, who was in a quiet sleep, and who was placed in the carriage without awaking. Madame took her in her arms, and the carriage drove off.

Bourke contrived to find occupation for our informant more lucrative and easy than that of a mendicant picture-dealer, and so kept him in sight. We both felt very sanguine on the subject of this child. On connecting its sudden removal with Miss Trevillion's recognition of Austin at Père la Chaise, and with the circumstance of his companion having seen me in

the company of Matilde, I had little doubt but that the infant in question had an important bearing upon the mysteries we were determined to unravel.

'If there was not some secret concerning yourselves belonging to the babby,' remarked the Irishman, 'it's queer enough of the Confessor to be sending her off at that time of night; little thinking, Major Melville, that there's scarcely a postillion or conductor in Paris whom I do not know something of at this time of day. Let Harry Bourke alone for following a scent, even athwart running water.'

About noon I made another attempt to see Mary, and fortunately found her alone, which gave us a delightful opportunity of talking over the interesting manuscript. I made the *amende honorable*, confessed that Lady Trevillion was washed white as snow, and signified my intention to follow up her recovery with every energy of my soul. Mary thanked me with tears.

I did not, however, add to the pleasurable excitement my determination produced by venturing to impart what had come to my knowledge respecting the child. It would be time enough for such intelligence if my hopes should be realised; and I, therefore, kept that little secret to myself. But I told her that I had traced out some haunts of Mr. Austin's, and was fortunate in finding a most intelligent assistant, with whom I meant to perform my pilgrimage in Tourain. She gave me a line of introduction to Louise Garsin at Derval, from whom she had not heard for several months; and I left her full of hopes, which I almost repented to have raised, but stimulated by her gratitude to accomplish the task which I had undertaken. Bourke, who was no small favorite with Madame la Propriétaire, succeeded in appointing our new ally as his substitute; and the young man, charmed by his good fortune, was more than zealous in our service. He had to run home after dinner for some clothes, and he brought back a budget of intelligence. Madame Bellenger was expected to return the following evening, and André, her brother, had received orders from their employer to leave Paris the succeeding day. 'André,' he added, 'was most anxious to sell a few paintings, and he had advised him to bring them himself that very night to the hôtel, in order that I might have an opportunity of questioning him.'

This was rather beyond my commission. I foresaw no good

in making acquaintance with the confidential agent of Priest Austin; but Bourke, with one glance, discovered a thousand advantages. 'It's all for the best,' he said. 'It's laid out that you should know all these people—Père la Chaise for that, and your meeting with the daughter; perhaps seeing the infant itself, with the thick veil over its face, in the arms of the *Bonne*. I have thought of a scheme. Let us leave Paris along with him, the very same day, in the very same carriage. Depend on it, he's going to be a watch on the child. Perhaps he might lead to the mother; sure, it's all clear as the day-light. You must see him, Major Melville! You must buy one of his daubs; he is, by all accounts, a conceited ignoramus, and in very poor circumstances to boot, quite dependent on his sister, who is a terrible brim—. It might be the best thing you could do to engage him for a travelling companion.'

'I cry you mercy, Master Bourke! this is really going too far—running at once into the mouth of the lion. Besides, he is already engaged to the priest.'

'No better way to stop a lion's mouth,' resumed the persevering courier, 'provided you cram it sufficiently. Oh, Major Melville, if we miss this tide, such another piece of good luck will never be borne on the floods again. Do you think he will mind being engaged to Father Austin? Do you think he would mind putting Protestant money in one pouch, and the Priest's blessing into another? Not a bit! He's one of that kidney who fears neither Pope nor Presbytery; he lives by his wits, and would as soon serve ten masters as one. Don't make believe to know where he's going, or, indeed, that he is going at all; but just ask him if he could find you a mighty agreeable, well-informed, experienced companion, for a short excursion to the country, who would direct a little tour, and give a few lessons in sketching; that you want to be off to-morrow, or next day, etc. etc. It's he that will jump, I'll engage; it's he that will make no scruple at all of killing two birds with one stone.'

'And may it not strike him as something extraordinary that I should want two travelling companions? For, as to letting you off, that is out of the question.'

'Sure you don't think I want to be off? That's the least

of my thoughts, Major. It isn't one of us, by ourselves, that can watch Monsieur André. It isn't less than the four eyes of both that will keep him in sight.'

I could not at once take in the drift of Bourke's plan, yet it did not appear an unwise one; and, by the time of the artist's arrival, had made up my mind to be guided by circumstances and by the opinion I might form of him.

It was one part of Bourke's scheme to play least in sight; so that Monsieur André was introduced to me by his old acquaintance the waiter. We found sufficient occupation in looking over his portfolio, which contained the most execrable collection of what he called original views. I made one or two selections, which put him in excellent humor. He talked much of himself—expatiated on his delight (before the accident occurred, which deprived him of his arm) in professional tours—inquired if I sketched; and soon proclaimed his satisfaction at having the happiness of conversing with a gentleman of considerable taste. We bandied compliments in a most laughable manner; and I could scarcely refrain from betraying myself, when, on intimating my wish to make a sketching excursion, he almost offered his services. I said, 'that I only waited in Paris until a competent travelling companion could be procured; that I was impatient to be off while the verdure continued fresh; but, being particular, had found it difficult to suit myself, although very well inclined to be liberal.

On this inductive bit of temptation, André could no longer resist. I saw his eyes sparkle, and a look of self-satisfaction prefaced what was coming. He inquired if I meant to begin, like most travellers, with Brussels. I replied that I was indifferent as to route, provided the scenery pleased me, and that I could leave Paris without delay. Then came the offer, almost breathlessly delivered, followed by a vivid description of Tourain. He expatiated on the wonders of Orleans, of Tours, of the forest of Chinon. I professed ignorance of all. Perfectly acquainted with each bank of the Loire, he spoke of the scenery as superb, of the towns as magnificent, of the hôtels as being beyond praise. He had no doubt (notwithstanding that his right arm was useless) of being able to direct me in sketching, so as to render the excursion one of great advantage to me. In short, there was no hesitation, no modest reserves, as to his own competency. He

could descant on any subject—botany, history, architecture. I should have been an ignoramus indeed, not to make sure of so valuable a man—I had absolutely the offer of a prize. Of course I did not decline it. Terms were very soon arranged; but not one word, meanwhile, escaped him of his previous intentions. I could gather, by his very accommodating readiness to suit my impatience, that it was an object with himself to leave Paris immediately. He could be ready, if I wished, to set out on the next morning but one. He required a day to settle some affairs. Of course I made no objections, but left the arrangement of our journey to him, with no other restrictions than that we were not to have a private carriage. We then appointed to meet at a *messagerie*, and at an hour which he named.

I showed him down stairs, to prevent any encounter with the waiter, and returned to my apartment very much pleased with the turn of affairs; not without admiring the ready ingenuity of Bourke, who had so happy a knack of reconciling cross purposes. That person soon after joined me, and augured success from our having secured possession of André.

‘With your leave, sir,’ he proceeded, ‘it isn’t my intention to let this travelling companion of ours see a sight of me at all. I can easily manage it. While he sits with yourself in the *coupée* of a diligence, thinking, to be sure, that he has you all alone, I shall take up my quarters as rear guard; and thus, close at hand, without making one of the party, be able to keep a sharp look out upon him. If he knew I was your courier he would be on the alert. It’s far better, don’t you see, to leave him unsuspecting.’

Just as I promised not to interfere with the operation of a plan which was rather too intricate for my guidance, I received a packet from Mary Trevillion, inclosing some introductory letters to friends of hers at Tours, with a few useful references to guide my own movements. Dismissing less agreeable company, I resigned myself to contemplations which I had long forborne, but in which I ever delighted to indulge.

CHAPTER XIX.

At the early hour appointed by Monsieur André I was seated *tête-à-tête* in the *coupée* of a diligence with my self-satisfied and busy companion, who proved, at least in the department of the *cuisine*, a very efficient courier. We had an excellent *déjûné* at Etampes, of which, however, Bourke did not venture to partake. But at Orleans, when I joined the *table d'hôte*, he placed himself *en face*, looking, to use his own expression, quite innocent, and fully occupied in discussing several excellently cooked dishes which lay within reach. Observation was not, however, absorbed in the business of eating; for his quick intelligent eye lit occasionally on André, who, seated lower down, talked without intermission. I longed to rid myself of the latter, whose loquacity in the pent-up carriage had wearied me to death, and find relief in the originality of Bourke. But this could not be. Prudence condemned me for the remainder of the evening to sight-seeing and view-hunting with my sketching master.

Travellers, with their minds at ease, and having leisure, may no doubt find much at Orleans to interest and amuse; but to me the most pleasing incident of the evening was a shabby sealed note that I found thrust into my dressing case, and which during my absence had been placed there by Bourke.

'SIR—You lose time by staying at Orleans; Blois is likely to prove a more interesting place. Please to choose your own apartments in the Hôtel de France; a long gallery *en seconde* affords the best accommodation; little white crosses shall mark two rooms most convenient. The one you sleep in here to-night is only separated by a thin partition from your next neighbor, so true is the saying that "walls have ears."

'H. B.'

André used much persuasion to keep me at Orleans, and must have set me down as a very incurious, unenlightened, and unmanageable specimen of the John Bull tribe, when I insisted on proceeding.

Nothing worth notice occurred on the road. He either knew, or pretended to know, the name of every château, of every vineyard that we passed; and I arrived at Blois with my head full of information, which, whether interesting or useful, was soon put to flight by an excellent dinner, and the still more pleasing sight of Bourke when supper appeared, whose intelligent eye told, plain as eye could tell, of realised expectation.

He declined a rubber of whist, or a pool of *écarté*, with two half-pay officers and a teacher of languages; but, retiring into a corner, read over, with seeming attention, an old Paris newspaper; and withdrew, ere long, to his chamber. I presently followed, having already made choice of the room pointed out in his note; which, as I guessed, joined that which he had taken for himself.

The presence of this good-natured man, and the pleasant expression of his countenance, soon relieved the tedium of solitude. 'It's fine times for me, Major,' he said, on entering, while he carefully secured the door, 'to be seeing the world in this sort of way; travelling about for my own recreation, and at your expense. However, I've got some inkling of hope which is likely to pay. It was late last night when I got out of Orleans, but no great harm in that. We reached Amboise betimes in the morning: an ancient town enough, with a castle on a hill; looking grand at a distance, like most places in France, and certain people in it to boot; but, like them, having nothing to boast of on nearer inspection. However, be it as it may, real grandeur or sham, gloomy or gay, it's in the same town of Amboise I met with my quarry—not the woman we want, but another who knows her. Well, the child is safe any how; for I'm sure it's the same. Angers is our mark, and not far from the Château de St. Aubin; neither is Chinon—a short day's journey. And, should there be any delay or difficulty in the business, I know a decent French priest, who lives at the last place. He speaks beautiful English, having passed a couple of years in the county of Mayo.'

'Bourke, my good fellow, have done with the priests, at all events till you have done with my business. I would not accept

the power of Kildare, with Norah Creina to boot, to let one of the fraternity into my councils.'

'That's just as you please, Major: not but that this honest old gentleman is as true as the sun. His story would go to your heart, if there was time to hear it. However, we will let him alone: things may get on without benefit of clergy; for the road is straightforward before us as the windings of the river. You can stay here, if you like, or meet me at Tours; where I shall (please St. Peter) show myself by the day after to-morrow; if not, the day after that.'

'You have not told me yet whither you are going, what woman you are in pursuit of, or why you feel so sure that the little girl of the Rue des Postes is the daughter of Lady Trevillion.'

'Sure, Major, I'm not come to her yet, nor to her-nurse. It's all guess work; but that's above rason sometimes; or rather it's the way the hounds rason by shorthand, Major. I'm as certain it's she as that I'm an Irishman born. However, you know I could not take my oath upon either. To-morrow (please the saints) I start early for Angers; make out this nurse, with whom I hear the child is placed, and return to Tours; where you will wait for me, of course.'

'Why should I not go on to Angers? I am all impatience to ascertain if this child be Lady Trevillion's—to discover the secret of the mother's detention.'

'Ah, Major! it's little you know of secret conspiracies, or how these long-headed plotters organise their plans. Yes, organise, sir; for it's all done on a system. I larnt more than I should have done amongst them that are nameless. But, "by-gones are by-gones," as your countrymen say; and, if the knowledge I gained in the paths of the evil one can help us along in our way to the truth, why it's not had for nothing, that's all. 'Tisn't straightforward, all's right, bowl away, like the English mail-coaches, which, no matter how many the starting-posts, all come in together at the very same time: neither deviation, nor circumlocution, nor any molestation, as ever I heard of. But this business of yours is another guess sort of case; unless we take a circuit, we'll never come straight.

'Supposing this woman is not at Angers—supposing the child is not where I am told—all our chance is keeping André in sight. He'll not give you up while you pay him so well; yet he must

do his duty by this Father Austin : so we shall catch him some day in a dilemma, while he is striving to hit his two birds with one stone. Besides, Major, it would not answer the part we are acting, for you to pass by *la belle Tours* : no Frenchman alive could forgive the affront. It's a fine city, in ayrest; and I can work on by myself much more at my ease than in company.'

'You seem intimately acquainted with our proposed scene of action ; yet I do not remember that you acknowledged this till now.'

'May be not, Major Melville ; for the thought of it leads to my troubles : and there has been no time for them, nor for any other recreation, since I have had the honor to serve you. But it's odd if I didn't say that it was when sailing up the Loire I first got acquainted with old Father——Bless me ! his name is gone out of my head. But that's nothing to the purpose. He's a good honest sowl, and as grateful-hearted a crathur as if he was born in the kingdom of Kerry, for all that he's a priest.'

'I make no objection to your friends, individually ; but, as it is to priestly influence mine owe their misfortunes, we might do much mischief by taking the best of them into our councils. You have told me nothing as yet about this woman at Amboise ; and I am impatient to learn particulars.'

'You shall have all that I know in less than two words. First and foremost, I met the conductor of the *diligence* who took Madame Bellenger up at Orleans, the very first half-hour that I entered the town. He saw her off from Blois in a *calèche*, on her way to Amboise, as he thought. Now I'm informed, by the woman I saw at Amboise, that she went on to Angers, by way of Chinon, without touching at Tours. It's at Chinon the worthy old crathur of a priest——'

I interrupted him rather impatiently. 'We must have nothing to do with the priest ! I protest against such sort of assistants ! The loosing and binding of jesuitical engagements are pretty well understood by me now.'

'Sure you don't take this old gentleman for one of them ?' he cried. 'St. Mary defend us ! Ah, no, by no manes. Isn't he one of the poor persecuted clergy that stuck to his king and his church, and the government of his country, so long as it had one, and never joined art or part with rebels, or revolutionists, but lost all by his loyalty ? When nothing remained of his friends

and fellow sufferers but them that was murdered in cold blood, or died of destitution, he escaped by a miracle, and came over to Ireland, which has been a refuge for saints, time immemorial: and though his church and his government have now got back their own, there is he—an honor and credit to both—starving upon a bit of a chapel at Chinon; and was starved entirely, when by good luck he cast up with us on board the steam boat—that's with an English clergyman—God bless him and his!—who gave the poor heart-broken priest share and share alike of his males on the passage, and a cast in his carriage from Chinon to Tours.'

'Was he of La Vendée?' I inquired, wishing to hear more of a person who I foresaw would be thrust upon me.

'Of La Vendée! sure enough, sir. There's some of his story connected with my troubles, for he keeps up a correspondence in Nenagh to this day; and it was through his kindness I first larnt the decaits of Miss Bailey—that's the chief constable's daughter at Nenagh—who stood five feet six in her stockings, with as portly a step as ever trod on a floor. Ah! it was not on French paving stones she got her paces! But we'll lave her alone for the present, and name no names at all, but poor old Father——The saints be about us, what is the matter? Sure it can't be that my memory's failing me? The man that I know as well as myself, and his name gone clean out of my head!'

'It seems rather strange,' I replied: 'I should take it as a warning to have nothing to do with him.'

'Do you think so in ayrnest?' he asked very seriously. 'For if it is a warning we're bound to respect it. It's I that have a right not to mock at the same, for it was neglect of a warning that brought me where I am, lost me house and home, and caused all my troubles: I'll tell you the story, Major, in less than two minutes. My mother, to begin, was a lady promiscuously.'

'Promiscuously!—what can you mean by a lady promiscuously?'

'I mane, Major Melville, by nature and birth, not like one that is made by money or larning, which may be the case with any mechanic. A born lady, such as she, who loved a free horse and a fox chase, and could ride like the wind—so off she canters one day with a first cousin of her own, eldest son of a third sister of her father's by the second wife, as likely a

young fellow as ever trod in shoe-leather, and as bold a huntsman as ever went out with the hounds. But not one brass farthen had they between them, except the horse that they rode, and he got in a present from my mother's eldest brother, Mr. Richard, for breaking his neck in his stead—or offering to break it, which was much the same thing.'

'Really, Bourke, you are quite incomprehensible, and I am so anxious to hear more of Amboise.'

'Well, sure, I'm spaking plain English as ever was spoken, and a very great pleasure it is, especially in company with a regular gentleman, who is not dispising his fellow cratures for their losses: besides the comfort of calling in all the old recollections that are gone out of one's memory long ago. I'll not be five minutes telling what happened.'

'How? what happened?'

'O Major, you Scotch are enough to puzzle the Chancellor; as if I was not quite comprehensive, and sailing away like the wind, or a steam packet. But to explain, my mother's youngest brother—she was not my mother at that time—had a noble fine hunter; you could not match her for beauty, but she had the very deuce of a speret, especially for running away; and Mr. Richard—but this is *entre nous*—was no great things of a rider. So my mother says to my father—and they sweet-hearts at the time, but unknown to themselves, as I verily believe—"Jack," says she, "couldn't you stop my brother Dick riding Wildoats? That baste will be the death of the lad."

'With that my father's heart jumps up in his mouth—I've heard him tell the story thousands of times—for her will was his law; and he goes straight to the young squire, who no one dare thwart, for he was terribly passionate, and he lays him a wager—there was no other way of daling with the lad—betting the one life that was to run in the lase against Wildoats himself, that he would ride the same horse without whip or spur, and win the fox's brush after all. Not another penny's worth had he to bet but the lase of the farm and the one life that was to run. However, he thought little of that in comparison of plaising Miss Monica; for, as I said before, her will was his law. So Mr. Richard he laughed, and he closed; adding a condition, that there should be no stirrups.

'Divel a care father cared: there was not such a rider, old

or young, in the province of Leinster. And next morning he mounts Wildoats according to agreement—is in at the death according to promise—and home before one of them; Miss Monica herself looking out from the window, and crying “Bravo!” when she sees the brush in his hat. No other than himself could have won it that day, riding at such odds, without stirrups or spurs. In course he gained the horse, and with it the lady. Not a fortnight elapsed till he had Wildoats well trained, and made a moonlight race of it, as mentioned already—the two cousins together; as handsome a couple as ever went to the priest.

‘But, as I have said, they had scarce a farthen between them, and might have been sore pressed for the marriage fee itself, except that Father Fagan had a spite to her father, and, being a good-natured man, he joined the young couple in a compliment.

‘From that present time neither father, or mother, or brothers, ever forgave her. To be sure the rack-rent old house was no home for a born lady like my mother, although the blood of Tom Bourke was as good as their own, saving that their mother was third cousin by her father’s side to the Fitzgeralds—a noble fine race! I could tell you of them and their pedigree since the days when poor ould Ireland had kings of her own; and how Priest Mac Cormack came to be a bishop through them—he nothing to begin but the son of a cow-herd; they were good as they were knowledgeable—that’s the Fitzgeralds! and when the ould Lord saw Pat counting the stars, and striving night after night to make out their numbers, he conjectured by that that the boy was a genius. So what does he do but sends him straight to Maynooth; and what he learned there being past comprehension, from less to more he comes to a bishoprick; and that’s what my mother thought of for me: only, in respect to the bees—’

‘For mercy’s sake, Bourke,’ I entreated, ‘have done with digressions; we shall not reach the end of your story to-night; and, besides my impatience to get back to Amboise, I have quite lost the thread of the discourse.’

‘Well, of all the stories that ever I told, this same gets on quickest; sure I’ve never digressed a step out of the road, except to tell you of Wildoats, and the wager concerning him,

and how my father and mother got married in a compliment, or about the Fitzgeralds and Bishop Mac Cormack. But to go back to the farm which he held by a lease of three lives, two of which had dropped: the house, as before mentioned, was no place for my mother, she being a lady promiscuously, and brought up like a queen, as were her fathers before her, caring for nothing nor nobody except plaising themselves from morning till night. But, though she was not rich, she was very happy; for he gave her her way to the hour of her death, and what could she have more in a palace?

‘However, now comes the consequence of neglecting signs, which brings us back to where we began. A fortune-teller foretold, when she was sixteen years old, that her husband should be the handsomest man and the boldest hunter in Leinster; but that he would go out before the birth-day of her first-born child, and that his horse should come home without saddle or bridle. Well, she was young then, poor thing! and she thought more of the handsome man and the bold hunter than she did of the warning; and as John Bourke was both the one and the other, none else could be laid out for her. So, all being ordained, how could she help herself? Not but she fretted, as in duty bound, for the hard-heartedness of her parents, and the insolence of her brothers, looking down, as they did, on their own flesh and blood. However, one day, a month before I was expected, she was walking alone in the bit of a kitchen garden, striving if she could see a few strawberries, poor thing! being used, till that summer, to plenty of fruit. She had on her beaver hat and a big bunch of black feathers. So what should take place but the swarming of a hive, and they lit on her feathers: never a word did she say, or a call did she call, but up with her two hands quite gently to her ears, and walks slow as a snail round the garden; the bees hanging down all about her like a veil—Heaven preserve us!—old nurse Kelly standing in the back door looking on, saying nothing or doing nothing, but screeching as if she was murdered; Peggy, the dairy girl, echoing her again, with little Mick, the gossoon.

‘But a better thing could never have happened, for the bees rose, clever and clean, off my mother’s black hat; and, following the noise, would have swarmed every one of them on Peggy’s

red head, only she ran into the chimney. So nothing was talked of all day but the luck of my mother, and the wonderful fortune that must come to her child;—it's to come yet, Major, that same wonderful fortune, and no doubt would have come long before now, only for the sake of one pint of sweet milk. It's a bad thing, as they say in Ireland, to dream of sweet milk, or to spill it, or refuse it to any one. And it's only a wonder to me how a woman of nurse Kelly's experience did not know better: but you shall hear.

'That very same evening, just before dark, a queer little old woman comes softly to the door and asks for a drink of sweet milk; my mother had laid down with the headache, father was out in the stable, and nurse Kelly—there is no saying what came over the woman—refused her the drink, and bid her be off. Not a word did she utter, but lifts up her stick and shakes it at nurse, hitting the door-sill three times. Peggy and the gossoon were busy at the same time with a kettle and pot beating up for a swarm: she looked over the wall, and never as much as saying "God bless your work!" strides out of the place muttering something which they could swear was a curse. So it turned out, for the next day my father rode into Rosscreea—not that he had any business at the sessions, or any thing to sell in the market, only it was expected there would be a ruction, and his pride was in showing the folk at the big house that he always had time for his pleasure; besides, it killed Mr. Richard to see him on Wildoats; but he paid dear, as we all did, for that satisfaction. A more unlucky ride could not have been taken, for, to make good the prophecy, home comes his horse without saddle or bridle, galloping and snorting the way mother should hear him.

'Hear him she did—poor delicate creature! The pains of child-birth came on, and myself, born of a misfortune, came into this weary world at the very same hour that her gentle spirit left it for a better. Mortal eye in the parish never set eyes on that same old woman, and it's long before my father spoke a word to nurse Kelly; only for her care and her tenderness to myself he would have been the death of her often, for trouble and losses fell on the house. He took to the bottle for comfort; and was often beside himself, unfortunate man!'

'I thought that your father was to have died by that fall from

his horse. It was exceedingly unkind of the seer not to explain things more clearly.'

'Death was to come of it, Major Melville,' said Bourke very seriously, 'and so it did; you'll mind that the fortune-teller did not name day or date, but she said what was true for all that—'

"The spade of the Sexton should not be long idle,
When the hunter came home without saddle or bridle."

'He only got off to tighten the girths, when Wildoats made a bound out of his hand, and dashed home over hedge and ditch. Father's time was not come, nor did it come for seventeen years. But he never did good from that day of doom, and before I was eight years old you might have counted him eighty, going off by degrees like the snuff of a candle. It was on my nineteenth birth-day that he drew his last breath. So much, Major Melville, for neglecting warnings!'

Astonished at the seriousness of his aspect, I inquired if it were possible that a man of his apparent good sense and experience of the world could possibly retain such idle superstitions, believe in the power of a wretched old beggar woman, or imagine that the control of life and death, good and evil, is transferred by an all-wise, just, and merciful Creator into the hands of poor sinning mortals.

'We don't know if the old woman was mortal,' he replied with a sort of shudder, 'and it's not good to be doubting anything. A curse is a curse, let it come whence it may, and brings death and destruction to many a door—a warning is a warning! I cannot remember the decent old Vendean clergyman by name, and, may be, so best; only he was a good-hearted, grateful-minded creature, and had no more thought for self-interest than the baby unborn, or the father before me, who had pride enough to hinder him making up with poor mother's unnatural parents, although they repented after her death, and would have given her the grandest funeral in the county, if he had taken it from them; and they would have brought me home to their own place, and put me to college, only he would not demean himself to owe them that much; but sold the two cows to buy Nora Creina, the way I might ride out with the hounds to prove my independence, whereby he lost house and land, and may be his life. If you had seen him on the deck of the steam-packet, as I did!'

‘Your father in the steam-packet!’

‘Lord! no, sir, but the priest: surely father died before ever I left the place; shortly after, all he possessed was canted for three years’ rent, the two horses and everything, proving that Wildoats was his death in the end, for, from the day and hour he saw that glorious baste go out of the yard, his heart died within him. One-and-twenty years old was the noble hunter that day, and not much the worse for the wear. My father left me his blessing—he had nothing else then—on condition that I would never exchange one civil word with the new owners of Wildoats; and no more I did, nor ever forfeited his blessing, thanks be to God and Father Phelim O’Donahoe, who spirited me up when my pride was giving in. His sister’s son is settled in the farm, and I’m told it’s a prosperous place. But though the old grandfather would have left it to me, I preferred travelling with my own father’s legacy, rather than staying in Ireland without it. And that’s what brought me to France, and made me throw up the ensigncy, which Colonel Bourke promised I should have in the Mayo Militia, the farm, you know, being a qualification. Oh, Major Melville! it’s the Vendean Priest could tell you of signs, and wonders, and events that were foretold in the troublesome times. Poor old gentleman! I wish you could have seen him standing, as I did—his arms crossed on his bosom—tall, spare, and bent by age and misfortune. It’s not yourself would have doubted him. Clean and decent he was withal; his pale face calm as the slow-moving river, and the black gown of him threadbare and patched. ’Twas the month of November, sir—the deck frozen ever, every one on board eating and drinking, and keeping the life in them with coffee or soup, and plenty of clothing. But there he stood upon deck, while others went down, the cold wind cutting through him, neglected by all, and jeered at by some—for the worst sign of the times we live in is disrespect for the cloth, Major—until the state cabin passengers came up from their dinner. There were three clergymen present, a dean and his coadjutor, with a lusty young priest as red as a parrot. They took no more notice than if he was a dog—Jesuits every soul of them!—till the gentleman in whose company I travelled at that time, a Protestant clergyman, happening to spy him, asked of the captain why he was not at dinner?’

“‘Because,” said the scoffer, “he’s under the penance of

poverty. Monsieur le Curé has paid but half-price for his passage. I cannot afford to give him his nourishment likewise."

'Well, sir, Mr. Jessop goes straight to the steerage, and falls into talk with the priest. From less to more they soon got acquainted, and the former calls for spiced wine, and we gave him share of our coffee before leaving the boat. Some shrugged their shoulders, and others cried "Bah!" But Mr. Jessop said he was much the best of the party, and that he told him a great deal of the war in La Vendée, pointing at the most remarkable places as we sailed up the Loire. It was a tedious sail, Major, from Nantes to Angers; not worth the time at that season of the year. As for the vineyards, they're no better looking than withered potato-fields; and the banks of the river entirely tame, except here and there a battered old castle, or a ruined convent—all mighty sad till you come up to Saumur. The bridge and the castle is there pretty well. But commend me to the green hills of old Ireland! and the bright sparkling rivers, or the ancient oak trees of old England let to grow to their natural size; and the evergreens, and shady lanes, and white cottages, with their tidy paddocks, and nice curling smoke in the evenings, putting a man in mind of his own fire-side; the fine noble parks kept like so many gardens; and the teeming cattle, up to their eyes in the choicest of grass, browsing at freedom, or bathing in the rivers—not one poor solitary baste, like a babby in leading strings, turning out for an hour's walk, with its nurse by its side—and the spanking fine horses, bowling-roads, and mail-coaches! Well, after all, there's no country like England or Ireland either on the face of the globe. More shame to them that quits one or the other!'

'May I ask, Master Bourke, why you follow so pernicious an example?'

'Oh! as to me, sir, it's a different matter. I bring nothing out of it excepting my poverty, of which there's plenty remaining, though I never went home; and for staying here, now that I'm in it, use is second nature—one very bad consequence of coming abroad. England again, though the first of all places to live in, provided one has money to pay for the luxury, is not without its drawbacks to a man of gentility and edication like myself, who runs short. Sure there's a root in old England that every mother's son commits idolatry with, and that's "the root of all evil";,

worst luck i' the end to them or their children, they may depend on it. But here I am, Major Melville, keeping you up, and forgetting the hour; and I have not been in bed for two nights myself.'

'Forgetting what brought us to Blois, my friend. Be so good as to begin once more at the beginning; and without any more diversions, inform me at once of the plan of proceedings. What do we gain by this visit to Angers?—and when am I to see you again?'

'I can tell neither one nor the other until I have been at Angers myself. My direction to the nurse there is our only clue at present: I got her address by going to Amboise, and the Holy Virgin alone knows to what she may lead. If we could make sure of the child, would it not be something?'

'It would be everything, for I trust that the child might lead to the mother. You start early to-morrow?'

'Yes; and, please the saints, shall meet you at Tours. The Hôtel d'Angleterre is a very good house; you can spend a few days there comfortably enough, and keep André in sight till my return. It would not do at all were he to slip to Angers.'

I exclaimed against a few days, and he promised, if possible, to join me in two; but, at the same time, begged not to be hurried, as caution was everything in so delicate a business; 'and you know, sir,' he added, 'that when once a man finds himself caught in a labyrinth, if he don't wind and wind out of it, he'll lose himself entirely. I could tell you a droll story of a labyrinth, Major.'

'Not till you have had a night's rest, Master Bourke, so away to your bed, and for Angers betimes! This is Saturday evening. I shall expect you on Monday at Tours.'

CHAPTER XXIX.

ARRIVED at Tours; set down at the Hôtel d'Angleterre, obliged to keep André in sight, lest he should, as Bourke said, 'slip to Angers unknownst,' and counteract our plans; not daring to stir an inch, lest I should do mischief—I felt very much out of sorts for three days. It did not at all help the matter that I had to suffer the tortures of suspense, added to those of sight-seeing in company with my self-inflicted guide, who lost no opportunity of displaying his zeal, or his fitness for the office of a cicerone.

We ascertained the exact length of the Rue Royale, from the far-famed bridge of forty arches to the Barrier of Bourdeaux, with as much accuracy as if the ground was never trodden before. We penetrated the dark Cemetery of St. Martin, walked beneath the Tower of Charlemagne, sauntered round the promenades, heard a military band in the Cathedral, examined the excavated cellars of Louis the Eleventh, nor forgot the Prison Palace of that royal tyrant.

Although Plessis, as it now stands, with little more to recommend it, even as a ruin, than one melancholy tower and the remains of a few dismal dungeons, presents nothing picturesque in its site or venerable in its decay, still, who would be at Tours and not visit Plessis?—a place forgotten in the lapse of centuries; but for which, in later days, the wand of the Enchanter has created an undying interest. Led thither by feeling, rather than curiosity, I explored the prison chamber of the royal Charles, and looked into its fearful *oubliettes*, 'a sad memento of a savage heart.' Thankful that such power was no longer possessed by kings, and praying, with some misgivings, *that it*

might never be usurped by any democratical assembly, I stood in the neglected garden and dilapidated courts of that once gorgeous residence, filled with increased admiration of *his* resuscitating touch, who possessed the magic power of restoring to life, to light, to beauty, in all their pristine vigor, the stirring scenes and busy actors of former ages. I leant against the scathed and gnarled oak, which tradition points out as having served the purpose of a gallows; nor did its leafless branches, like the withered arms of death, nor the sterile ground beneath them, contradict their melancholy history. Not a soul was visible, yet the breathings of a multitude seemed to float around us. The music of the clarion, the clangor of arms, the rattling of chains, the voices of Oliver, of Quentin Durward, sounded in our ears. Never did the genius of Walter Scott exert a more delightful influence over the mind—never lead to reflections more salutary. It carried me back to scenes of usefulness—it filled me with patriotism. Proud of owing my birth to the same soil whence emanated that genius, pictures of Caledonia, true as they were gratifying, presented themselves to my recollection,

‘While home scenes passed before the exile’s eye,
Pure as the retrospects of infancy.’

Dandie of Liddesdale, whistling his harriers over the heathery hills; Dandie Dinmont, a representation of everything excellent and elevating in human nature—one of a thousand characters equally well drawn, equally natural—

‘Brought back the wanderer, who too soon forgets
His purer feelings with his home regrets.’

The brown moors and sparkling rivers of my native land rose before me with an impression so vivid, that I could have imagined familiar sounds to fill all space, and the barking of Pepper and Mustard to answer their master’s call.

But my companion took care that such reveries should not be long enjoyed. The accents of the Frenchman dispelled the barking of the dogs, reminding me that dinner would be waiting, and, probably, spoiled, and obliging me to exchange the imaginary freshness of the pure northern breeze for the rich *fumets* of a southern *cuisine*.

There was no sign of Bourke that evening, neither the next day; and my observant cicerone, seeing that I took little delight in the lions of Tours, proposed that we should ride to Chanonsone; adding, that he could procure me a good horse, and an English saddle. To this proposal I readily agreed, it being the most eligible plan by which I could keep him in view, without chance of awkward rencounters with my old acquaintances, which I especially wished to avoid at the time. A saddle-horse was also a temptation to a man tired to death of being pent up in a close carriage, with the never-ceasing egotism of a companion who had already exhausted my patience. Indeed, the more I knew of André the more I disliked him. Querulous as busy; gay one moment, dissatisfied the next; always selfish, mean, and distrustful, I longed for the hour which might rid me of his presence. On the other hand, experience seemed to warrant the good opinion that I had so hastily formed of my Irish adjunct, who, though shrewd and observant, was still full of confidence in his fellow-creatures, and who, seeing everything under the influence of his own happy temper, kept me, when we met, in good humor with himself and all the world beside.

But the self-infliction of such companionship was a small tribute of service to Mary Trevillion; and I strictly adhered to the injunctions of Bourke, by keeping André about me so late at night and so early in the morning, that it was quite impossible he could find out the movements of the latter, or 'slip to Angers unknownst'; nor was it until the morning of our intended ride to Chanonsone that I detected anything suspicious in his conduct. But, upon this occasion, he certainly had his own plans in view, and was determined we should sleep at Amboise, which I as determinedly opposed. Upon which he had recourse to expedients; such as purposely delaying the horses and neglecting to have our passports altered in time, then making a two hours' business of what any one could do in ten minutes.

By means of all this contrivance, it was very late when we set forth; yet not sufficiently so to render the staying out at night absolutely imperative. He, however, insisted on carrying a small *valise*, containing some dressing articles, in case of accidental detention; and, when we had ridden about two English

miles out of the city, he suddenly reined in his horse, searched his pockets hastily, and uttered a thousand exclamations of vexation, and sundry accusations against himself. At last it came out that the passport was forgotten—that he had left it on the table in his haste. Ten minutes would suffice for its recovery: if I would only ride on at a moderate pace he would overtake me immediately.

So saying, and scarcely waiting my reply, he flew off at full gallop. It was now past one o'clock. I determined not to be the dupe of his schemes; and, when he had ridden out of sight, followed him slowly, in the direction of Tours. I had nearly reached the bridge when he came posting towards me at the utmost vigor of speed.

I heard the exclamation '*Sacré!*' escape him as he pulled up his horse, and marked the extreme chagrin expressed in his looks.

'The passport must do another day, Monsieur André,' I said; 'it is now much too late for our expedition to commence. So, in lieu of Chanonsone, we will e'en take a breathing along the Saumur road.'

Having no choice, he was forced to acquiesce, and, though with evident reluctance, faced about to the left, when a man riding full gallop over the bridge, caused me to pause for a moment. He was mounted on an excellent roadster, and I instantly recognised Bourke.

He saw me also, and at the same time who rode beside me. Therefore, without taking any notice or slackening his speed, he crossed at the barrière, and proceeded up the opposite hill.

I had now reason to congratulate myself on my retrograde movement, and, shortening my ride, returned home in the course of an hour, to wait, with what patience I might, for the much-desired colloquy with my indefatigable envoy.

But though André went out for some errand of his own, promising to return in an hour, that hour—the longest I ever passed—had gone the circuit of the pendule before a low knocking at a chamber door which communicated with mine, gave notice of the neighborhood and vigilance of Bourke.

'Sir,' said he, cautiously protruding his head, 'you must get rid of Monsieur André for a short time this evening. Treat him

to the *comédie*, but bid him return at supper time. Oh, Major Melville! 'tis I who have prospered—'tis I that have something to tell. There's nothing like going upon one's own business. Here was the poor lady's husband living in Tours, in the very thick of the plot, in the heart of the mischief, and he knowing no more than the man in the moon! Here was his sister, by your account, breaking her heart, and spending her money all to no purpose, bribing a set of rogues who were laughing in their sleeves, and paying her off with lies and inventions. Here were they both, within twelve leagues of Saumur, never dreaming or thinking that the poor dear decaived crature, who had her senses may be as well as themselves, was shut up for a maniac in that villanous den, called "L'Hospice de la Providence"—her babby torn from her, and sent divel knows where, with some of his Majesty's subjects and co-partners to be sure. You wouldn't believe that I have seen Louise, the pretty little girl from Derval—you would not believe that I know all about the babby, dear darling child!—and who it is in charge with. But there's not a moment at present to tell you a word. André will be in, and, if he was to see me, all the game would be up. Well! if that's not a rogue!—I have him, however, 'cute as he thinks himself. Thanks to my bit of a cabinet, and to the crowded hôtel that had not a better room disengaged; look at it, Major, is it not the very moral of an eavesdropper?'

'Run off,' I said, 'to some other hôtel—the Pheasant for instance. Hire a room at any expense, I cannot wait till evening—I will join you immediately, if you run down to the Pheasant.'

'No, sir, with your leave, we'll stay quietly here. This shark of an artist might track us to the Pheasant. Besides, 'tisn't safe to be laving this room—I'll explain all in the evening. The *comédie* is early, and André, I am sure, will be glad to go out. Meanwhile, I'll take a stretch on my bit of a bed: you'll just knock me up when the coast is quite clear.'

Bourke had, indeed, crammed himself into the smallest possible space: a very little bed took up half the little chamber; one chair and a washing-stand occupied the other. His dressing-glass hung against the wall. But, as he said, 'it was mighty convenient,' having one door of communication with my spacious

apartment, and another by which he could get out on the lobby.

I will not attempt to describe my impatience until dinner was served: it was at length eaten, and Maurice André fairly off to the *comédie*. He had proposed this resource *pour passer le temps* every evening, at every place where we stopped; but as I wished to remain unrecognised by any chance travellers, his suggestions were thrown out to no purpose. On the present occasion I pleaded having letters to write, and begged he would amuse himself his own way.

'We will bolt the door, if you please,' said Bourke when I joined him. 'I have watched the movements of Monsieur André to some purpose this morning. But it would be all labor thrown away if he saw me with you. But all in rotation is the only fair way of telling a story. You remember, Major Melville, that we parted at Blois?'

'Certainly, but what of the unhappy Lady Trevillion; tell me, I beg of you, if she is a maniac at Saumur.'

'No, not now, as I know of; but 'tis a question easier put than answered. In short, sir, 'tis from travelling along with me you can form a judgment. My tale's not so clear that a glance can show it all. And interruptions, begging pardon, in the way of questions, delay the conclusion considerably, just as stopping to take up passengers retards the progress of a coach; and that's one reason, Major Melville, that I don't like public conveyances.'

'Let's back to Blois then,' I cried, 'and not a question will I ask; but, if you digress, it will be utterly impossible to restrain my impatience.'

'In troth I believe you, sir, though, speaking generally, the natives of your country let themselves out less than the natives of mine. You would be surprised to hear me reckoned a talker; that is, one that did talk before trouble and sorrow tied up my tongue. It is no harm, however, to be a little out-spoken, if what one says makes no mischief; for pent-up sorrow is the worst of all sorrow, and preys most upon the health as well as the spirits. I must have died of the poor girl in Ireland, when her decait came to my knowledge, only for Lieutenant Dixon of the Connaught Rangers. He was at

our hôtel, and had troubles of his own! so being a Tipperary lad and an officer to boot, we used to make our confessions no secrets, and much good did they do so, and a great consolation they were.'

'For pity's sake,' I exclaimed, 'let us go back to Blois! I am perfectly satisfied with that retrograde movement: but if you diverge to Paris, André will be home from the *comédie*.'

'Not at all, sir; not at all. Lieutenant Dixon takes me to Blois. He has a mother and sister living in the town; and I had a sight of them before I left it. Very nice ladies both—Irish born—Milesians by the mother's side, Mrs. Dixon being a Miss Mac Namara—real royalty every drop in their veins. I've a rason for speaking about them, which you shall hear in due course. But, to begin at the beginning, I had half-an-hour's law of the *diligence*; and they coming into my head, up I runs to their lodgings on the top of the hill, where they made very much of me, though I was a stranger—sure sign how kind they felt towards their relation; for nothing's so true, though it's a worn-out saying, as "Love me, love my dog." And, by the bye, this puts me in mind—had Lady Trevillion a maid called Celeste? I remembered the names of the girls at Derval, Catherine and Louise; but I never heard you tell of that same lady's maid.'

'No matter; go on! What have you heard of her?'

'A good deal, sir, St. Mary be praised! And a sweet pretty girl she is. Not Celeste, poor unfortunate crathur! but this little Louise. What puts me in mind of "Love me love my dog" is the great regard this same Louise has for a carrier-pigeon, which she gave the lady's little boy when he was staying at her father's, and which the poor child left behind him at Nantes.

'Well, there might be some excuse for taking off the lady; but the innocent child—holy saints be about us!—meddling with what was not their own! But to go back to Louise—she knows this Celeste, who, it seems, is as great a villain as the other men; only she repented in a sort of way, and made a bit of a confession. But, as I say, what's the good of repentance after the sin is committed: if she had done so before, it might have been of some use. Think of her

being all along a confederate with the Irish Confessor! However, she told a good deal. And guess who it was to? Why, to no other living than to old Father Gregory at Chinon. Louise minded me of his name: sure sign there's luck to come of that girl.'

'But did he repeat what she told him? Was it possible for a priest to betray a confession?'

'May be we've no occasion to ask him the favor; may be Louise was beforehand in hearing it all. But I'm not come to her yet, nor to Amboise, nor Angers! and there's no making head or tail of a story, unless after a straightforward fashion. You have the patience of Job, Major; and, only for interrupting me in the commencement, we should have been at La Valière before now: but that will come in time.

'It was quite by a chance that I saw Louise; for the old woman at Amboise was a premeditatrix—she, as I told you, who gave me the direction to Angers. However, to make a long story short, I posted to Angers, and put up my quarters at a second-rate inn. It was late when I got there, and a good-looking young woman was waiting me up; not me in particular, but any chance traveller. By good luck, there were none but myself; so I ordered supper, the best in the place, by way of prolonging conversation and inducing civility. So we fell into talk; and by one thing and another—making believe to know what I wanted to hear—this girl at last came round to the point I was aiming at, and told me that one Madame Clement, who lived near La Valière and whose husband was steward at the Château de St. Aubin, had been to Angers a few days before, to take charge of a little girl that arrived there from Paris. This woman, Madame Clement, had not come to their house, but had hired a horse from them, her own being lamed. I did not let on to her that I wanted to go there, or speak as if I had any interest in the matter; but, getting up in the morning, I provided myself with a pony, and inquired my way to St. Aubin.

'Well, Major, I did not come quite so straight as you may suppose; for there was no child at all with the steward or his wife—at least no one about the place knew of any child, male or female, having come to their house. But Madame Clement had been away for two days; and it was easy to guess the

cause of her journey: the child must be somewhere. I debated with myself whether I would go to the steward's house or not, or what I should say when I got there. But I had a great notion to do it; and bethought me of an errand, riding along. So I prayed to blessed St. Peter again and again, for it was his holy day into the bargain. A light heart and a hard gallop I had, through as rich a country and as promising a harvest as if I was on the banks of the Shannon, God be with it! Every thing smiling, and promising fairly. After all, there's nothing speeds a journey so well as fine weather and sunshine—especially in a fine country. It's worse than heresy, begging your pardon, sir, not to believe that there's a blessing in all things.

'Well, it was the afternoon when I reached my 'destination, for the road was much longer than I had supposed; and when at last I sees the house, my courage was cooled. But my heart rose up again; I felt as if the power of the keys was upon me; so, in the name of the same blessed saint, I made up my mind to ask boldly for Monsieur Clement. He was within, and so was his wife. They looked strange enough; but I spoke them so civil, and so like themselves, that they came to after a minute; for I inquired, in the friendliest manner you can imagine, for Alphonse de Clement, their relation, and said I would rather see him again on the face of the earth, than any other friend in the world. They knew nothing of Alphonse—no blame to them for that; but were pleased that I tacked the *de* to their name, and boasted enough of brave soldiers and officers bearing the same—their relations, of course. I, to be sure, was very much disappointed, having ridden so far out of my way for no other purpose but to see my best friend, who had been so kind to me on many occasions, and who, I was told, lived at St. Aubin.

'The old man and his wife were chatty enough; so I made a remark on the Château, and asked if the Count lived at home, with a few more leading questions concerning the family. But here their mouths closed, not a word would they speak; and I should have come off as wise as I went, only for a young girl who sat present by. This, you may guess, was Louise; who, though she never looked up, nor seemed to mind me, thinking of nothing but petting her dove, lost not a word of what was going on, and

was all the time paying attention : for when I got up to take leave, and that her uncle, old Clement, asked me to stop and take something, she seconded his hospitality with so inviting a look, that I dropped down on my chair as if at the command of an angel.

‘Such eyes ! Major Melville. It’s them that can speak. But you shall see her yourself. She’s good as she’s pretty, and willing to serve us. The day’s not done yet, thinks I to myself ; and who knows what’s to come before the clock strikes midnight ? So thanking the old man for his consideration, and confessing myself both hungry and thirsty, I e’en kept my seat. He left the room for some wine ; his wife followed after. When both were out of hearing, Louise looks up, and, in a quick low voice, inquired, if I was English.

“‘I’m a subject of Great Britain, Mademoiselle,” was my answer. “But Irish born, and much at your service.”

““Do you come from England?” she asked me again.

““What do you know of England?” I made answer.

““I wish,” said she, in reply, “that I were really certain of what brought you here.”

““Had you condescended, Mademoiselle, to bestow half the attention on me that you do on that bird, there would be no need to inquire my errand to these parts.”

““I have attended to you particularly, Monsieur,” she said, looking rather arch, “and hope to be excused for what may seem impertinent ; but it appears to me that you are somewhat more interested about the Château de St. Aubin than about your friend Alphonse de Clement. Should this be the case, say so to me. I will not evade the subject as my uncle did ; he is on his guard ; you’ll get nothing from him ; I see that he suspects you already.”

‘You may believe there was no doubting Louise, especially in such a case as mine ; and, when fixing her large eyes again on my face, they seemed to say, as plain as tongue could speak, that there was no use on earth in denying the truth.

‘I felt queer enough when making my confession, which was done in a way the most guarded ; though it was not in the nature of things to believe that a creature so beautiful should be made to deceive, or that the signs of the morning should not be read before night.

'No more did she deceive, and, in the short time that we were left alone, I found out that she has both the will and the way to serve our turn. Oh, sir! it is she that has the kind heart.' A heart worth the gaining: if once touched, you may trust it for ever. She is coming here to-morrow on a visit to a friend, who lives in the Rue de Commerce. We shall then have all particulars. For the present she had only a few minutes' time while Madame, her aunt, was getting the supper; and all we know yet is that Louise has some papers, I believe written by Lady Trevillion herself; that she heard a good deal from Celeste; that the poor lady was taken a maniac to L'Hospice de la Providence; and that the little girl of the Rue des Postes is her child. Madame, the lace-mender, came only so far as Angers, and gave up the child to Madame Clement, who took it over the water, where it is to stay until Sir Charles Trevillion is safe off for Rome, when Madame Bellenger's brother, our scamp of an artist, is to carry it back to Paris again. These people know everything; but I hope they do not know us. We must not, however, let the grass grow under our feet, for there is a spy on the premises. Monsieur André, however, is caught in a trap.'

I begged he would tell me his meaning.

'I mean,' he continued, 'that one saint's day is as lucky as another. May they be our guidance! Monsieur André is neither more nor less, at this present moment, than a thief and a robber; no later than a few hours ago he was caught in the fact of committing an assault on your writing-desk. Just after you set off for Chanonsone I came into the yard here, and hearing some of the stable-boys speak of your route, guessed, by the lateness of the hour, that you meant to sleep at Amboise. Thinks I to myself, this will not do; so choosing a fresh horse, I came up, first and foremost, to the hole of a room, which having secured, and changed my apparel, whose voice should I hear, talking at all rates and saying he had rode back for the forgotten passport, than that of your precious sketching-master. I, of course, kept close in my crib, saying nothing to nobody, until the fellow shuts himself up in this room, opens drawer after drawer, locking and unlocking in a violent hurry; so there being but a temporary partition between us, with two or three loop-holes very temptingly placed, I thought it no harm to make use of my eyes, the

ears being already engaged in your service; and—would you believe it?—what should I see but André, in the act of opening your writing-desk, with two or three skeleton-keys on the table.

“It isn’t much knowledge you’ll gain by your tricks,” says I to myself, as he tossed over the letters; “for the Major’s correspondents are not like to be French.” But no matter for that; he selects what he wants, locks up the desk, and hastens down stairs, confirming a suspicion I have often entertained, that these sort of folk, foreign servants and couriers, understand more of English than they choose to avow. I mounted my horse as he mounted his, and followed him down the Rue Royale. We passed unsuspected, as you know, at the bridge; and seeing that the Chanonsone ride was relinquished, I returned to my post, got a morsel of dinner, and ensconced myself again in my hole of a hiding-place. You came home; André went out. I followed him instantly, and dodged him until he reached a certain street, and until he entered the poverty-struck lodging of a language master—some half-starving devil, who is ready for any job. Well, two or three tailors were working on the same floor, and I stayed looking at waistcoats, until André departed. I then pounced on the little scholar at his task—that of translating your correspondence, and putting the English letters into French, which, in his vain eagerness to hide that he worked with a dictionary, were left open for my edification. I pretended to want some lessons in Italian, of which, by the bye, he don’t know a word, and gained a few moments to glance at the papers; when, perfectly satisfied that they were yours, I hastened away, lest our artist should return.’

‘Should we not commit him at once for a robbery?’ I said: ‘but let us first examine the writing-desk.’

Mary Trevillion’s manuscript I knew was not in it, or else I should not have waited so quietly; but there were several letters from Lucy and others, with Mary’s memorandum, and references to persons both at Tours and at Nantes. There were quite enough to give André all the information he wanted, with power to frustrate my plans and proceedings. I therefore recommended his immediate detention, as a measure of security, until we should confer with Louise. But Bourke was of a different opinion. He contended that, if we had recourse to the civil authorities, all our

power over André would be at an end ; that, though there were no better police in the world, nor no more efficient magistrates than at that time in France, still, when law or justice was required by Englishmen, John Bull had small chance of an impartial verdict.

‘Besides,’ he continued, ‘the church has to do in this matter, or rather the Jesuits ; and André, as their agent, is sure of protection. If it was murder, Major Melville, instead of robbery, he would be got out of the scrape in some way or other. They could turn the tables as easy as whistle. May be it’s myself would be strung up in his place. The only thing for us is to see Louise first—perhaps secure the child ; and, if we cannot do without André in the case of the lady, then tax him ourselves, and frighten his life out.’

‘In other words, Master Bourke, extort a confession ; for it would be rather unchristian to send him off the stage under such a weight of crime as he carries about him, without one moment’s time for benefit of clergy.’

‘It would, indeed, be unchristian in one sense ; for the poor wretch might be writhing long enough in his doom of expiation before all belonging to him could raise a sum sufficient to pay his way out. Louise will not be here until late in the evening. You will have time to ride to Chanonsone early to-morrow : it is a curious old place, well worth the seeing : besides, we must evade the suspicions of André by not giving up the excursion, and kill our two birds by keeping him in sight. Do, Major Melville, be guided by me. I have pretty good experience of this people now. The only way to manage is to catch them in their toils ; and if we see them watching us, to watch them more closely, but appear, all the while, to take their palaver for gospel.’

‘I have heard, Master Bourke, of Irish invention ; but, however ingenious the system may be, for myself I should prefer a more straightforward course.’

‘As to invention, sir,’ said Bourke, rather piqued, ‘you must know before this that it’s the child of necessity ; and where, may I ask, is there any parent so prolific as Ireland ! It’s from the hand to the mouth with most of her offspring ; and neither one nor the other can afford time to be stopping for trifles.’

'Say, rather, to hesitate between invention and facts; because the one may afford an immediate resource, the other a distant security; and because the reciprocal sympathy between these two members must be carried on at all hazards. A nation of bulls is not a misnomer, where the shortest way to gain an end is by means of a circumbendibus.'

'Oh, it's very fine talking, sir, of circumbendibuses and straightforward courses; but you forget, at this moment, that we're not in old England, where, in nine cases out of ten, the law does its duty. There, *as yet*, there are no hidden places, like monasteries or asylums, where the arm of justice can't reach at all hours. But show me one chance in this country, if we go thwarting the church. None upon earth but loss and disappointment. The poor lady, should she live, would be hid ten fathoms deep—her child crammed into some dungeon of a convent. Is not there Italy open, if France could'n't hide them? They would be over the frontier before André's warrant was issued. Let us go on, Major, as we have begun; there's nothing worse in the world than slipping the course of events, or quarrelling with one's bread and butter before it is spread.'

'At all events, Bourke, I shall not quarrel with you, for your zeal and activity deserve my best thanks. Louise, you say, will be here to-morrow evening, and ready to see me in the Rue de Commerce?'

'Yes; there's no fear of her, if there's truth in a woman. I will be in waiting at number two hundred—no occasion to make any inquiry at all—by eight o'clock in the evening you will find me as I say; and now, sir, good night! André will be in from the *comédie*; give him some Scotch letter to put in the post. Say in it that you have given up all hope of finding Lady Trevillion: we must play him off for a day or two longer until we know what is come of the inmate in L'Hospice de la Providence. Poor lady! it's like enough that her senses are gone.'

I shared the fears of my companion, and felt more anxious than ever for the recovery of this interesting being. As yet, in so short a time, my enterprise had prospered beyond my expectations. Louise having known something of Celeste, and being so providentially connected with the steward at St. Aubin, gave every hope of success—if, indeed, the unfortunate Clotilde and

her son were not shrouded from all discovery in the awful darkness of the grave.

Ten o'clock struck. The vaudeville was over. Bourke hastened down stairs to his supper. I prepared my Scotch letter, which was finished, and sealed when André came in. We talked of the *comédie* and indifferent matters, arranged for a very early ride in the morning, and I got rid of his loquacity by retiring to bed.

CHAPTER XXI.

CHANONSONE—at present possessed by the Viscomte de Villeneuve, well known as a luxurious residence of Marie de Medecis, and fortunate as having escaped spoliation during the levelling period of the revolutionary madness—presents one of the most interesting locales near Tours, being a perfect specimen of the olden time. The ride thence through a richly wooded plain, bounded right and left by two beautiful rivers, is varied on one side by magnificent reaches of the Loire, on the other by occasional vistas reaching to the Cher—while the castle itself, embracing both banks of that deep though silent river, and principally erected on arches which span its width, containing kitchens and *oubliettes* opening into the water, and possessing antique and gorgeous furniture in the highest state of preservation, affords much more curious and gratifying objects of admiration than the desecrated churches of Tours, transformed, most of them, into warehouses, smithies, or carriers' yards.

But Chanonsone, abounding in local beauty and historical remains, failed to create the interest it must otherwise have done, had my mind been less preoccupied, and I returned to the Hôtel d'Angleterre in the Rue Royale at Tours, thinking much more of Louise Garsin than of Marie de Medecis.

I found, on entering my apartments, that I was no longer *incognito*. Mr. Innes, a countryman, had espied me on horseback, and left his card in my rooms with an invitation to dinner. It was too late to avail myself of it; but I was beginning to feel the want of a companion such as Innes, and of a counsellor less fond of roundabout paths than my very zealous but too sanguine *attaché*, Harry Bourke.

At nine o'clock to the moment I kept my appointment; but

having to blind André, I called first on Innes. True to his post, I met my trusty Bourke. We ascended together the wide public stair of what had once been a splendid hôtel, and in a *chambre particulière* found the interesting Louise, whose admiration of Mademoiselle Trevillion rendered her still more charming to me.

Bourke, looking rather unhappy, left us alone, though I suspect he had had his previous *tête-à-tête*. Louise was intelligent, and expressed herself willing to tell me all she knew, now that there was a safe opportunity. Two priests had come to Derval about twelve months before, putting the whole family under an interdict of silence. The church, they said, had taken up the affair, and could allow of no secular interference. Therefore it was that she had not dared to answer Miss Trevillion's letters, or venture any information, except once in the case of Celeste, which had failed, as Mademoiselle was not at Tours at the time, and Louise, afraid of compromising her parents, had abided by the restriction ever since. The little girl brought from Paris by its nurse, and given in care to Madame Clement, she now knew to be the daughter of Lady Trevillion. It was in charge, for the present, with persons she named at the south bank of the Loire; but these persons, she was sure, knew nothing of its parentage. I then questioned her on the touching subject of L'Hospice de la Providence, but she knew only so far as had dropped from Celeste.

'About ten months ago,' continued Louise, 'I went with my sister, at that time a bride, to her house in the neighborhood of Chinon; we there recognised Celeste, looking wretchedly ill; she was shortly after laid up in a fever: I went to see her. She talked a great deal, and said many things in her ravings that went to my heart. It was on that occasion I wrote to Mademoiselle, but she was gone to Germany; and the letter, which merely desired her presence at Chinon, being returned, I durst not, as I have said, write to her again. But let what might be the hazard, I took down in writing much that fell from Celeste, and have that paper in safety at Derval. I sent for the *curé*, an excellent man, who confessed her, and got from her a packet, which she told me was written by her lady, and left behind when she went to L'Hospice de la Providence at Saumur. This packet is still in possession of Le Père Gregoire.

He has promised to give it me whenever I claim it: I mean to do so on Thursday: it is sealed and marked for me—was sealed before I saw it. You, sir, can make what use of it you please. I have not dared to examine the contents. We know Celeste is dead, for the wretched woman, when she recovered her fever, wandered away no one knew whither, and a body being found in the river near Amboise, we are sure, by the description, that it was that miserable creature. Monsieur Bourke is coming to Derval, he shall then have the paper I told you of, but to send any packet here would be out of my power.'

'But can you not now,' I said, 'remember the contents? Can you not give me some clue to discover this poor lady, who, whether maniac or not, deserves our pity, and every exertion which it is in our power to make?'

'I would that I could!' she cried, bursting into tears. 'But I have promised my mother not to open my lips. The papers, Monsieur, are none of my property. They belong, I feel certain, to Mademoiselle Trevillion—I wish to get rid of them. They are not safe to keep, my parents and friends may be endangered; I will give them up to Monsieur Bourke; and as for the packet in charge of Le Père Gregoire, I wish it were also safe in your keeping. I durst not demand it till there was some one to take it. We return to Chinon to-morrow afternoon; next day, if Monsieur Bourke waits where I told him, he shall receive it from me.'

'O, Louise!' I said, 'it is a dreadful long waiting: as you have broken the ice, why not tell me more?—why not say if Lady Trevillion is a maniac or not?'

'I have said little or nothing of Lady Trevillion,' replied Louise: 'I am interdicted from speaking of her; nor indeed, Monsieur, have I any thing to say. Celeste did rave of L'Hospice at Saumur, but Madame, I should think, was not long confined there.'

'And William!—dear Louise! is there nothing of that child? He whom you loved and played with at Derval. Did not Celeste tell you if he lived?'

'The papers will tell you,' she said, again bursting into tears. 'But ask me no more: I have done wrong already; I have disobeyed my mother; I may bring down the arm of the church on our house; and now, sir, good night! my sister will return—she

will not like to see a stranger. Do not think me unkind—do not let Mademoiselle hate me—I give up the papers—it is all I can do.'

For this '*all*' I thanked her warmly, and took leave, not having any desire to encounter her sister. Bourke was waiting my departure at the foot of the stairs: I promised to sit up and send André to bed. The former returned to his cabinet in a happy flow of spirits. We met in my room, and, bolting the door, talked over our plans till day broke through the window blinds. Not inclined for bed, and extremely impatient at the delays in prospective, I took a sudden desire of visiting Saumur. Bourke was commissioned to deliver a letter from the propriétaire of our hôtel in Paris to a sister of charity at Saumur, who was a relative of the former. I wished to be the bearer of this letter myself, and to make acquaintance with the *religieuse*. I should have abundant time before the return of Bourke with his packet from Chinon, and I knew that a *diligence* would leave Tours for Saumur in less than an hour. In short, the spirit of action had taken hold of my mind; I was not in a humor to act the automaton—self-denial was out of the question—L'Hospice de la Providence ran in my head. It would have been more agreeable to leave André behind, but policy required that I should keep him in sight; and therefore calling him up, I desired he would get himself ready for an excursion.

He looked rather surprised, but made no demur. I obtained the letter from Bourke. We started at five, and reached our destination by noon.

This daring resolve, which in my state of thralldom was rather an out-break, had every chance of incurring the disappointment which rashness deserves. I might not, during my short stay, find the *religieuse* disengaged; or, if disengaged and inclined to be communicative, a very improbable supposition, how should I contrive an hour's *tête-à-tête* without exciting the curiosity, and subjecting myself to the watchfulness, of André. But André, as if involved in cares of his own, was less curious and watchful than usual. We mounted the castle, saw the military school, and sauntered on the bridge, which is a general promenade, and from which the town, the castle, and river, present a splendid *coup d'œil*. I know few places which wear a more imposing appearance at first sight, or which falls so short of real interest

on further acquaintance, than Saumur—a general fault with all striking beauties.

On the bridge André left me, to seek, as he said, for some old acquaintances at the other side the river, when I wended my way back to the town, and soon found out the house which I wanted.

The *religieuse* was at home, and very much pleased to hear from her friend. She asked much about Paris, and other worldly news; but her manners were tinctured by her occupation—mild and benevolent, though a little important. We talked on various subjects connected with Saumur, and came at last to L'Hospice de la Providence, of which she was a charitable visitor, frequently taking her turn as nurse to the insane. In short, my fair friend was quite in her element, and no ways inclined to put her candle under a bushel. She offered to show me part of this boasted asylum if I could remain until the next afternoon. But to comply with her condition was not in my power: the return of Bourke, with the packet from Chinon, inferred a much more material as well as more certain acquisition than what might accrue from my exploring a prison of unfortunate maniacs, especially as the person of Lady Trevillion was not known to me. And I saw, as we conversed, that, obliging as was our 'Sister of Charity', and communicative as she seemed on general subjects, there was no obtaining from her any information upon individual cases. She would not acknowledge, though she could not deny, that some unfortunate persons were there concealed from their friends. But she found excuses, 'if such were the case,' in conscientious motives, for the apparent oppression. She said that the names of all patients were scrupulously held back in delicacy to themselves and their families.

In short, nothing more was to be obtained from Constance St. Clair; and, joining André at the hôtel, I got over the tedium of the evening by accompanying him to the theatre.

By the first public conveyance we left Saumur next morning; and reached Tours again early in the afternoon. In the court of the Hôtel d'Angleterre I met my friend Innes, who insisted on my dining with him that day. To this proposition I could not object. Nor, indeed, had I any repugnance; for it had occurred to me, since aware of his residence at Tours, that I

wanted a friend—especially on this business of the writing-desk—more experienced in jurisprudence than my zealous Irish adjunct, and less devoted to a system where ‘necessity owns no law.’

When on my way to dinner, as the clocks were chiming five, I came up with Bourke in the Rue Archevêché. He had that moment arrived, and exhibited a picture of success and self-applause.

We stopped for an instant, and appointed our meeting at ten; a most vexatious delay, but one not to be avoided. He had obtained the promised papers and information besides, which, from his hasty hints, led me to believe that our search was near an end, and that no less a prize than Lady Trevillion herself was to reward our exertions.

The social evening with Innes and his agreeable family must have proved a delightful treat had my mind been less pre-occupied. Even as it was, such cheerful society braced and enlivened me. But, had it been the reverse—had that evening been spent in a palace of dulness, or in the deepest dungeon in France—its conclusion would have amply rewarded me: for, speaking of my previous excursion to Saumur, that town made a subject of conversation, in which L’Hospice de la Providence formed a principal feature, Mrs. Innes having, about three months before, made a similar visit to a ‘Sister of Charity’, with pretty much the same success as myself.

‘A friend of hers,’ she told me, ‘having passed some days at Saumur, in the summer of the preceding year, had witnessed a scene in the court of the *hospice*, which left a melancholy impression on her mind; and, aware that Mrs. Innes was coming to Tours, had begged of her to make inquiry as to the object which caused that impression. She gave me,’ continued Mrs. Innes, ‘the address of that very person whose name you have mentioned. But I will read you part of her letter which refers to this subject. Your recent visit to the spot will render it more interesting.’

“‘It was in the month of August,” wrote Mrs. Grant, “that I went with this *religieuse*, Constance St. Clair, a ‘Sister of Charity’, who nurses the insane patients at L’Hospice de la Providence, at Saumur, to inspect that melancholy asylum. Having satisfied curiosity, we were passing out again, when a

two-wheeled carriage drove into the yard. It was one of those heavy, lumbering vehicles common to the country, with a deep leathern head, and would scarcely have attracted my attention except that a *gens d'arme* sat beside the driver, and that, looking to see whom he guarded, I perceived a young female, very wretchedly clad—inasmuch as that her clothes were torn and soiled—but of a most distinguished appearance. Never can I forget the wan, wasted, yet majestic figure of that unhappy creature, the dignity with which she repelled every attempt of those in waiting to assist her from the carriage, or to relieve her from the burden of a female child, somewhere about six months old, who was clasped—poor infant!—with fearful fondness to the maternal bosom; but who turned round its sweet unconscious face, and smiled upon the by-standers. It was a heart-rending contrast—the placid countenance and bright blue smiling eyes of that innocent creature, with the fixed despair imprinted on its mother's young but faded features, her affrighted and averted glance.

“Dreadful, too, was the agonised fondness with which that child was retained in the arms of a maniac. Still more dreadful to contemplate the cruel, forcible separation, which must ere long deprive a miserable captive of her only solace; and I could not resist an entreaty that my conductress would return and bespeak for these unfortunates the kind attendance of her gentle sisters. But it might not be. An inexorable porter guarded the door; and we, with a few other stragglers, were ordered to depart.

“Still the poor maniac, though goaded by her guards, lingered on the steps, looked wistfully back upon the court, and seemed as if watching a moment to escape. I kept my place; and, seeing the two keepers attempt to urge her progress by force of arms, could not resist an exclamation of horror. My exclamation was in English. The wretched object who excited it quickly turned round, darted from her retainers, threw herself at my feet, and implored me in the same language to protect her. But the porter interfered—the two keepers rushed between us—I was thrust down the steps, and, as they closed her in from my sight, the piercing shriek that she uttered rendered me almost as wild as herself.

“Through the medium of my companion I learned next day

that the police, in traversing a forest some leagues from Saumur, had come up with this interesting wanderer, and, seeing her to be insane, naturally sought refuge for her at L'Hospice, where no doubt she would shortly be claimed by her friends. It was supposed, and indeed very evident, that she had stolen her child from those who had it in charge, and that she lived in horror of losing it again.

“The expression of her countenance as she fell at my feet, the idea of all she had to go through, the language in which she implored me to save her, have made the most painful impression on my mind. I could only learn since that she had been removed. But by whom, or under what circumstances, no one could inform me. Constance St. Clair may have gained some intelligence since. She promised to inquire. Do try and see her. We conclude the poor lady to be a person of rank, and that some unusual circumstances are attached to her insanity. I never beheld a more queen-like deportment, although clothed in torn fragments of a rather coarse dress. Her eyes were dark, large, and in shape, color, and expression, albeit they were wild, exceedingly beautiful. Her look of entreaty, as she knelt, for that heart-rending moment, at my feet, might have melted the stern soul of a Nero. The eyes of the infant formed a remarkable contrast, being what is termed a bright liquid blue, soft, infantine, and mirthful. The mother dropped from her bosom a small map of the provinces stamped upon linen. She had dotted, with ink, the cross country roads to St. Malo. This little circumstance proves at least that there was method in her madness; that escape was contemplated upon somewhat of a plan; and, added to the circumstance of her addressing me in English, increases the interest I feel in her fate.”

Here was Clotilde described to the life. Here was the ruin of that lovely original, so accurately painted by Mary Trevillion. Could it be looked upon with any feelings save anguish! A being once so cherished, so admired, so indulged! The child of prosperity—the envied, the adored—become a homeless wanderer—a naked fugitive. Hunted like a doomed animal in her own native forests! rudely assailed! savagely retained! driven to madness! contaminated by the brutal touch of low-lived coercion! Yes; it was herself! the Clotilde whom I sought; whom, independent of all other interest,

of name or of relationship, I could have forfeited my life to recover.

Ten o'clock struck. There was not a moment to make Innes a partner in my feelings. But I determined to do so, and, on taking leave, requested he would receive me next morning.

Eleven had chimed, and no Harry Bourke. Every minute seemed an hour. I longed to behold that face fraught with good tidings—to hear the recital which promised so much—above all, to receive the paper written by Clotilde. But, when he did at last come—when he stood silent before me—it was with so changed an appearance, an aspect so woful, that I could scarcely believe my own sight.

Fear, mortification, vexation, a mingled expression not seen there before, entirely altered that late exulting countenance. We looked at each other, but neither of us spoke. At length, throwing his hat on the floor and himself into a chair, as if reckless of propriety, he thrust a dirty letter into my hand, telling me to read it; but, at the same time, anticipating its contents in the following characteristic lament:—

‘Oh, it’s long and it’s long since I thought to see a Moll Doyle, or a Ribbon notice in these foreign parts! or to have one or the other left in my way at such a distance from home! It never came across me to look for the same. What have you done, Harry Bourke!—fool that you are to deserve such a visitation? Read it, sir, read it. You’ll see that it’s over with us from this moment for ever. For ever! isn’t that a desperation of a word? You’ll see that we’re tracked, that we’re known, that every action’s reported of, and that we are informed of, or may be found out without any information whatever, by those that has a knowledge of all things and are in all places. Sure I’ve known the country since they came into power. Sure I’ve heard enough to be more on my guard! only I’m an idiot; and was so from my birth, and ever shall be—the steward at St. Aubin for that—the hornet’s nest that I rushed into there! Oh! it’s I that am vexed and grieved to the heart. But it cannot be helped. It’s my fate: it was born with me. The bees and the drink of milk and the witch wife together. Signs on them all! Have you any commands to old England, Major? for ’tis as true as the sun that I must be off. Aye, off like a shot before dawn of day,

while the dew is on the grass—that's supposing there is dew, or anything like it, in this parched-up land, where hearts are as hard as the pastures are bare. I that was laid out for a different journey. I that was to follow Louise on Saturday. Oh, no! Harry Bourke, it's not the track of your foot that will be seen in the village of Derval. Louise may well wonder, as no doubt she will. But you're not reading a word of the letter, sir!'

'I am silent with astonishment, and trying to ascertain your meaning; truly, Bourke, it seems as if your senses were gone. Let me, however, look over this scroll.'

He placed his finger on his parched lip in token of obedience, while I read as follows:—

'These lines are to let you know, Mister Henry Bourke, that the motive of your visits to Amboise and Angers is pretty well known; and that, touching the matter in hand, it is safe neither for body nor soul.

'What business have you to be meddling or making with Holy Mother Church, or interfering with matters above your comprehension? Have a care that you are not marked down as a heretic for going against her decrees, and uniting yourself with her enemies. Have a care, I say, that no Scottish gold tempts you to defy those who serve this sam notice; who have the power to make mincemeat of you here, and send you to the four winds of heaven hereafter, never to be united in death.

Mark that, Harry Bourke! The poor sinful soul condemned for everlasting to the tortures of purgatory, which all the Scotch lairds or Cornish baronets from John o'Groat's house to the Land's-end could make no interest to release you from.

'So take a friend's warning before it be too late, or a short stop will be put to your touring. Remember whose eye is upon you. Remember that there's no escape. Take care and be off out of Tours.

'No more at present, only depend on a well-wisher that less friendly advice will await you if this is neglected, or if to-morrow's sun shines on your head at this side Le Mans.'

'The most iniquitous squib that ever was penned,' I said, returning the scroll; 'and evidently written by a countryman of your own. What power can such an one have at this distance from home? Think nought of it: scorn it! Why should a Moll Doyle or a Terry Alt (as you call these anonymous

threats) frighten you here? or have sufficient influence to absolve an honest man from performing his promise?’

‘What power did you say, sir? Oh! it’s little either yourself or any Scotch or English gentleman knows of that power. I could tell you enough, only it’s safest not speaking; and as to a promise one way or another, sure the Church has authority to bind or to loose, to absolve us from promises, should we be led by indiscretion, over-zeal, design, or evil communication, to make any pledge injurious to her interests. Little did I think what I was about! little did I reflect on the consequences! Suppose this poor lady was restored to her husband; suppose the kindness of heretics, compared with the discipline, which, for the soul’s sake, she is now forced to undergo, was to run the length of changing her religion, where would I be?—having first and foremost abetted in her eternal destruction, and made myself accountable for that same. Oh no, Major Melville! the breaking of my promise—if in such a case the breaking be a sin—must lie at the door of my clergy; but the abiding by it must fall on myself. Not but I’m sorry—not but what I’m grieved! It was the steward at St. Aubin, with his two-faced hospitality, and the old witch-wife, his dame—’tis they have informed; but it is the girl Louise who’s the real heart-scald.’

‘To tell you the truth, Bourke, I had my apprehensions of that visit. It was putting your head in the mouth of the lion.’

‘And what should we have known of Louise or the papers, but for that same lion’s mouth?’ returned Bourke; ‘and who is to hinder you going to Derval? To be sure it was a venture; and may be the cause of our present disappointment—may be not: for these Jesuits—the saints be about us!—throng in the city of Tours, Irish as well as others. Folk say they are sent here to keep watch, and report the proceedings of certain individuals who learnt too much liberality in England. But that’s neither here nor there, nor nothing to the purpose; be it as it may, they are crowding into the town like a swarm of locusts. It’s the very worst place we could pitch upon; and so Father Gregory—bless his honest heart!—told me no later than this morning.’

‘Then you have actually been to this priest, against my

advice, against my positive commands; and your disobedience has met its reward! But where are the papers? Where is the packet promised me by Louise? She too is not, I trust, a cowardly bigot.'

'I cannot give the papers: that would be tantamount to telling you every thing. The letter you've read not only puts a seal on my lips, but a lock on my fingers. Oh! it's I am the heart-broken man! May the Heavens be with you, and the saints be your guidance! I've a long journey to make before the sun shines on Tourain.'

'Is it possible,' I cried, 'that you can act in this manner? That having accepted a trust you wilfully betray it? that you have made me professions only to deceive? that you falsify your word, and break a solemn engagement, merely in consequence of an anonymous threat—a dirty bit of paper—a thing without a name—unworthy a thought from any man of honor—any one professing a spark of courage, of conscience, of fidelity?'

'Say on, Major, say on,' cried the mortified wretch, in accents of despair; 'say on, and break, as you are doing, the heart in my body. Make an end of Harry Bourke, and he'll be bound to you for ever. But surely it isn't a coward you take me for? Surely it's not them that has only power over the body that you think I would mind? Oh, no! the like of them may cut me in mincemeat, and heartily welcome. It's the soul, the immortal soul! It's them that has power to cast the soul into hell—to keep it there in bonds: it's them I dare not cross. Have you not seen it down on the paper? "*Never to be united!*" Think, only think, at the last day of all, to see thousands and thousands renewed in the flesh, the bones, and the blood, the dust gathered together, the dead brought to life, the old and the withered young and beautiful again; and one's own outcast soul lying in torment, without as much as its old ancient tenement to own it. Oh, if that's not enough!—Major, you are not the kind gentleman I took you for, if you could wish any fellow-creature to run such a chance.'

'And if you, Bourke, with the semblance of a rational being, can believe in such monstrous deceptions—can be so duped, so absurd—I am as well to be quit of your services. If you can suppose that mortals like ourselves have power to put such blasphemous threats in execution, to stand between a creature

and his Creator, I have no more to say: I have only to entreat that you will refer to authority higher than mine; that you will lay hold of a Bible and read the inspired word from beginning to end; that you will remember it is every word that of God, every line inspiration, owing nothing to the devices of man; that you will make use of reason, be guided by truth, and pray as you proceed that God will grant you light; and that, should we ever meet again, you will candidly tell me if in all that blessed book there is one single line to authorise the doctrine by which you are blinded—if, after reading it with a desire of knowledge, you can submit to any other preparation for eternity, or believe it possible to perform your probationary part, if not taught by the written word of the Lord.'

'We'll not argue cases now, Major Melville, for don't they say that the eye is upon us? I go in the first instance to Paris; and, if my mind misgives me there, lose no time in setting forward toward England. Blessed be Heaven! my conscience is clear: what I did, I did in ignorance, and meant to do no harm; neither would I have broken my word only in respect to my soul. I am grieved to the heart for the necessity, and the disappointment for you, Major; especially knowing what I know. But it cannot be helped: I am not my own master. There's one thing, however, and that I will do—I will leave alone confessing me this side the water, and I'll give you a month, let me be where I may, though it's a great self-denial; for neither peace nor rest will come to my share until I obtain absolution. The Heavens be with you, again and again!'

Never in my life had I been so thoroughly vexed; but it was in vain that I expressed my vexation; in vain that I entreated, expostulated, reasoned; equally in vain that I bitterly reproached him. To every effort, either of persuasion or anger, I received but one answer—'He was not his own master: he was bound to obey!'

'Suppose,' I said at last, 'that these inexorable tyrants should enjoin you to rob or to murder me, would you, in that case, esteem obedience meritorious?'

'Yes, without doubt; because obedience would be the greatest of penances. But I would not perform it for all that: soul

and body should suffer, here and hereafter, before a hand of mine should be raised against you. I never betrayed trust, Major Melville—I never will; but no man living can expect me to go against the orders received this blessed night from them who has the power to bind and to loose—that is, to keep my poor sinful soul in purgatory till the last day, though I might have the wealth of a Rothschild to pay myself out—let alone being penniless and dependent—the worse chance for me!’

‘And this poor persecuted lady,’ I said, with indignation; ‘this once happy wife, so good and so charitable, so innocent of crime, torn from her husband, bereaved of her children, robbed of her inheritance!’—is she to remain unredressed? How can a clear-sighted or reflecting being reconcile to his conscience so great an injustice? or be accessory to the protracted sufferings of an afflicted fellow creature?—a creature fraudulently separated from all she holds dear—sustaining, in her own person, the calumny which attaches to those who violate their vows—bearing the burden which should fall on her betrayers—wounded in spirit, broken in heart, and deprived of her reason in consequence of persecution? You acknowledge to have acquired the information we seek—to know that which must ensure me success; yet, upon a plea the most absurd and unmanly, refuse the assistance which you pledged yourself to give.’

‘Don’t speak so urgent, Major,’ he replied, with tears in his eyes. ‘Don’t be persuading me—it’s no manner of use. I could not be art or part in restoring my own sister (were she begging of me on her bended knees) to the power of a heretic husband. No, my own soul is enough to account for: you have my prayers for your safety—I dare not say your success. Don’t cross the will of Heaven, whatever betides: if things go against you, just leave them alone. ’Tis not for us, poor ignorant creatures, to be directing events. We cannot know what is for the best—we are no more than new-born babes, every one of us, in the hands of God.’

‘How lamentable,’ I cried, ‘that, with so much submission, such christian *feeling* at least, you should cherish opinions in other respects so erroneous—that, with an impulse which leads you to reliance on God, you should trust so implicitly in man, and take for your guides the fallible councils of the earthly, when the revealed will of Heaven is open for your instruction!’

'I am a poor ignorant creature, sir, and how can such a one understand the mysteries of the Scriptures, unless they be explained by persons learned in their difficulties or ordained to instruct? The written word is awful enough, let alone the traditions of the Fathers, which are handed down to the Roman Catholic church through her vicars from the beginning. No, sir, I'll neither forsake my clergy, nor betray my church. But you have confided in me, and I would go to the stake rather than turn informer. Holy Virgin! I am staying too long! I have stayed too long! The heart's up in my mouth, and there's an unruly member every minute on the tip of betraying me. May the saints have you in keeping and forewarn you in time! Good night, sir!'

'Good night, Harry Bourke, it is indeed waste of words to talk with you now. But should we meet again when these scheming Jesuits are far and away, perhaps your natural good sense may be allowed some fair play, and you may have shaken off the thralldom which renders a brave man a coward. Meanwhile I am your debtor for time spent in my service.'

'Not a fraction, Major Melville; not as much as a *sous*. I would not touch your money for the treasury of England! Oh, no! I have sinned as they tell me, and "the wages of sin is death." That's Scripture any how!—and a clear text enough: it needs no expounding: yet I heard it expounded when I went to hear a crack preacher of your church for once in my life. Oh! it's that man was the special pleader in argument. Thinks I to myself, it's well for whoever has you at his side. But I never went again on account of the penance. Put up your purse, Major: I have treated you bad enough without touching your gold. I have done evil already, without taking payment for nothing. There's no hindrance, sir, if you wish to see Louise.'

So saying he wrung my hand and darted from the room, the expression of his sorrowful face contradicting the obstinacy of his refusal. But I had no time for the solving so difficult an enigma as the sayings and doings of the Irish dupe, for the predicament in which he left me was sufficiently vexatious and puzzling to try the temper of an angel.

I had no resource left but to follow Louise, and get possession of the papers if Bourke had returned them; unless, indeed, some

death's-head or cloven-foot notice had reached her as well as him, and that she, too, should feel it necessary to falsify her word. That very night would have seen me off for Derval, only I was at a loss what to do with André, who might, after all, be my best mark for the safety of the child, and the discovery of her unfortunate mother.

Independent of my extreme disappointment in not receiving the promised packet, I felt exceedingly annoyed by the absence of Bourke; for, added to the useful nature of his services hitherto—added to his ready wit and disinterestedness of action—there was something so cheerful in the never-failing sunshine of his face, as led me, while it lasted, like a beacon of hope, safe through a wilderness of difficulties.

But, happily for me, Innes was at Tours: he was my fellow-countryman, an acute, sensible person, who, being bred to the law, though he did not now practise, was more skilful than myself in the solving of intricacies. Still, though acute and sensible, Innes was slow, perhaps over cautious and calculating, for the present emergency—the very opposite, in all respects, of my Irish defaulter, toward whom, at that moment, my feelings were inexplicable, and who (strange as it may seem) I would still have confided in and trusted to without suspicion. So much for the overflowing of a kindly disposition—so much for a countenance beaming with good humor and hilarity—so much for the occasional burst of an unsophisticated heart, the outpourings of a generous mind, though guided by error, and the slave of superstition!

I had sat ruminating on my disappointment for above half an hour, when the door cautiously opening aroused my attention, and, to my no small surprise, I saw the pale and agitated visage of Bourke once more protruded into the apartment.

Starting up, I approached, and welcomed him back; but, repulsing my advances, he drew toward the table, and with an air of assumed, or rather a reckless sort of carriage, emanating more from fear than from bravery, he threw down a small packet, and said, in hollow accents:—

‘It’s a folly to talk, Major: I cannot be breaking my word: or, rather, second thoughts is wisest. Not that I’m going to open my lips, or give you a syllable of information; but I’ve been reading that Moll Doyle—may her name be a pestilence!

—and there's not a word, good or bad, against giving up that paper. May be it's not safe to be keeping it about me, so I make it over to your care for better for worse. Time will prove whether the deed be a wrong or a right one; if the last, recollect me in the hour of my death, and that all the return Harry Bourke seeks at your hands is, that to neither chance nor to charity you'll leave his poor soul, but spend a few pounds to shorten its pains.'

I snatched at the paper, and seized hold of his hand, for he was instantly quitting the room. 'One favor more, ere I thank you for this: give me your promise that I shall see you in Scotland; that you will make me a visit on the banks of the Forth, where we may talk over these matters without fear of our lives. We have done with Moll Doyles and Terry Alts in my country since John Knox sent their precursors over the water.'

'It's all as well for yourself and your peace, Major Melville; but I'll never see that same country alive: promise me, sir, the small favor I ask. It will ease my poor mind when I'm at the last gasp.'

'Tell me first,' I inquired, 'where this paper was had?'

'It was had at Chinon last night from Father Gregory himself. I'll tell you no lie; Louise and myself went to him together; so there's the whole truth; and no harm on earth if we had not been tracked, and found out, and noticed. Father Gregory, I'll answer for him, did us no mischief; neither Ribbon-men nor Moll Doyles has he any knowledge of.'

'I will see him,' I said; 'I will leave a small sum in his hands for your use, to be appropriated to what purpose you please. Still I hope, my poor fellow, that we may meet in East Lothian, when the debt which I owe you—'

'Don't mention the word, sir,' he cried, interrupting me; 'I'm not my own master to do you a service; there's a duty to my superiors, and it must be performed. I was wrong, very wrong, to bind myself as I did; but your being a Protestant lightens the obligation. Don't mind Father Gregory till you hear from myself. Wherever you are, abroad or at home, when my day of doom comes Harry Bourke will appear; and you will know by that token that the time has arrived when Father Gregory of Chinon, or some other decent priest,

will want what I speak of for the purpose I mean. Meanwhile I must be off, according to orders. May the Mother of Mercies see you safe out of Tours!’

‘I wish I could see you throw off the yoke, Bourke—that you could defy, as I do, Jesuitical influence.’

He wrung my hand, shook his head, and, hurrying away, left the room without speaking.

'In the commencement of my married life, when next to God I loved my husband, and trusted that such love was innocent—when gratitude was all my debt to Heaven on earth, and existence one bright stream of overflowing joy—all appeared harmony, and all was peace. But when a doubt was raised—when duty was rendered distinct from happiness—when told that I had sinned, was sinning still, who shall describe my tortures? You, my dearest friends, cannot conceive them, for remorse has not been your bitter portion, and mine was bitter beyond all description. Despair, regret, but not repentance. I neither loathed nor could forsake my sin. I durst not bring myself to give it up. Alas! I loved it more than ever; while every grateful, every pious thought connected with my former duties were changed to apprehension. All my sweet and heavenly aspirations were converted into bitterness. Instead of resting on connubial love as on the tranquil security of virtue, I clung to it as passion clings to vice, wanting the courage to renounce it; and (ten thousand times more dreadful) the love of God, which made my world a Paradise, gave place to terror of His gracious name.

'Oh, my own Marie! when the cloud first came—that cold and dismal cloud o'ershadowing all my once bright prospects—when I found endurance so painful and repentance such a task, what consolation would it not have been could I have opened my full heart to you! But, alas! such consolation was not mine! I dared not, on such a subject, hold converse with an heretic. And, thus condemned to bear my load alone, no wonder if my judgment was obscured, or if the power of discrimination failed beneath a weight so cruelly oppressive.

'No longer daring to return that affection which made my sum of mortal happiness, dreading the interchange of sentiments that had so lately uttered all our souls, I shrunk from the domestic circle, became an alien under the domestic roof, and turned my steps from every haunt of social happiness.

'Educated in implicit obedience to my spiritual directors, forced to submit, and above all to dissemble, the conflict that I suffered became visible in my appearance. Can I forget the kind endeavors both of sister and husband? the incurious, delicate efforts made by one to win back the confidence of early years, by the other to amuse and indulge me? nor how

my heart recoiled at accepting such generous tokens of his love, which, though bestowed by him, and paid away by me to purchase happiness, failed so completely in their object?—while one word of unrestricted feeling—one burst of natural tears—one out-pouring of the troubled heart, would have been an indescribable relief.

‘I fear it was sin to wish for a less exacting Confessor—to feel lighter of heart when mine announced his intention of making a journey to Rome; but, if so, it has been expiated by subsequent suffering. Of the wreck and its awful consequences I will not now speak, except to say, that the acquittal of the accused, and their departure from the country, tranquillised my most tormenting fears. Lighter of heart when this agitating circumstance was over, my spirits and my feelings underwent the most beneficial re-action: and, when indulged with a visit to Bath, I felt, in quitting Pendyffryn for a short period, that I should return to it the happiest of human beings.

‘A change of Confessors was a decided benefit. I found Mr. Austin less severe than my late spiritual director; and though, in my case, he judged it safest to prohibit an indiscriminate use of the Bible and other books, and that the restrictions of his predecessor relative to confidential intercourse with heretics, especially on matters of faith, lost none of their force—though he could not altogether acquit me of sin in uniting myself to a Protestant, the sin was not represented in so heinous a light; and his exemption from avarice allowed me the enjoyment of appropriating as I pleased the munificent gifts of my husband, and of consulting the latter as to their distribution.

‘Above all, the retiring manners of Mr. Austin rendered him perfectly inoffensive. I was happier during our short sojourn at Bath than of late I had ever expected to be. I enjoyed the privileges of my religion; and, except within the walls of my church, was identified with none of its clergy but our accomplished and favored visitor.

‘We found our darling William in excellent health. He had not forgotten us; and clung to his father and myself with such liveliness of recollection, so much sensibility, that I totally forgot how criminal it was to be the mother of an heretic—how doubly criminal to lavish fondness on a creature so proscribed.

But, alas! that forgetfulness was not without its punishment. On the second evening after our return to Pendyffryn, Celeste presented me with a packet, which she said had been put into her hand by some person unknown. Its envelope indicated the wear and tear of a journey, and the handwriting of the superscription resembled that of Father Mac Cardwell.

‘I had not thought much of him lately: and a memento, so presented, filled me with dread. There was something portentous of evil in being reminded, so immediately on my return to my home, that home was for me no haven of rest. Desiring Celeste to put the packet away, I deferred its perusal until the following morning; and again in the morning, until Charles went out—ill prepared, by a night of fearful forebodings, for the cruel shock that awaited that perusal.

‘I then discovered, my poor Marie, what had afflicted you so much—what, even previous to the terrible event of the wreck, had robbed your cheek of its bloom, and given to your face so pained an expression. Alas! you were present, at the first fatal affray, when your unfortunate brother was guilty of a sacrilege. You saw him raise his hand against the anointed of the Lord—against a priest of the holy Roman Catholic church! And the effect of such a scene on your mind—an effect so remarkable at the time, and which recurred to my memory while I perused the fatal paper—must have confirmed the dreadful tale it conveyed, had not an appalling witness of its writer’s truth been also sent me. This witness was no other than the remnant of a handkerchief, torn, and stained with blood—with the blood of a priest, of my Confessor, drawn by my husband—and you saw it flow!

‘Every thing that then seemed strange was now accounted for—your ill-concealed terrors, the deep gloom of your brother, from which he was only roused by the event of the wreck, or relieved by the absence of the falsely-accused priest. But the calm which then followed was no more than a mockery: the storm, apparently gone by, was only stilled till the arrival of the Confessor at Rome. And then in what a form did it break upon our heads! I was commanded, under pain of excommunication, to part from you all, especially from him who lay under the curse promulgated by our church; to separate my thoughts, my interests, my affections, from the dear partners

of my heart. I was told to wear the semblance of obedience—to explain nothing, repeat nothing, *until I should receive final instructions from Rome.*

‘This was hard—almost impossible. The doctrine of remaining in sin, of exercising myself in the works of deception, was a doctrine I could not comprehend, although assured that the end would justify the means, and that there were always indulgences proportionate to exigent cases, and to the benefits which individuals had the power of conferring on the church. All this was incomprehensible. But could my teachers err? Ah, no! However conscience, reason, judgment, truth itself, might demur, I dare not doubt the infallibility of those teachers unless I were heretical at heart.

‘In so wretched a state I wished for the worst to arrive. I desired to relinquish all; to bury myself in the seclusion of a convent; to expiate for my own sins, and satisfy for those of my husband, by personal inflictions of the severest kind. But this would not be allowed: the time was not come.

‘Mr. Austin arrived in the country: Charles received him with pleasure; and I flew to confession as my only resource; hoping much from his mild and charitable temper. But he could only pity, not relieve me: he could do no more than encourage perseverance and enjoin me to obedience. I had written to the Père Montcalm; I had laid my whole heart open to that holy man; and the last hope of the wretched Clotilde hung upon the answer of her old preceptor.

‘Alas! that answer, so long delayed, proved but a consummation of my fate—served only to confirm my wretchedness. Agonised both in body and mind, I felt as if death would soon relieve me of my sufferings; and I augmented my load of guilt by wishing for such relief. But the corporeal agony subsided: a mysterious power upheld me. I was reserved, as has been proved, for trials more severe. The hour came when I was to make a separation from the bed of my husband, and the illness, which furnished some excuse, was indeed no pretence. But the more difficult the task, the more acute my sufferings, so much more worthy did I consider my penance. It was on this occasion, or shortly after, that you, my poor sister! were brought from happiness and Scotland to misery and Cornwall. It was from my conscientious perseverance in this separation that your brother

looked coldly on Mr. Austin—that he became reserved with his late admired companion: and, until then, it could not be said that I really suffered.

‘We sailed for France. Alas! I knew not that the bearer of that fatal packet from my Confessor sailed along with us. I knew not, till we reached Rennes, that the Confessor had returned from Rome—that he travelled our way; nor, until that unhappy morning when we lingered at Derval, had I any communication from him. Some expressions contained in a *billet* delivered to me by Celeste excited a faint hope in my bosom; I flattered myself, while reading it again and again, that, by making a great pecuniary sacrifice through the medium of the writer, I might purchase up the removal of the interdict. Under such an impression I was induced to confer with him; under such an impression I stole from my chamber; and, as the joyous laugh of my child reached me from the *salon*, I hailed it as an omen of good.

‘The Confessor was waiting in the orchard: but he could not, he said, confer with me there; nor was he himself authorised to make the communication hinted at in his note. I must drive with him to the neighboring monastery of Chateaubriand, and hear the opinion of his superiors. For the purpose of my doing so without any delay, he had ordered a carriage, which was then in waiting.

‘I had locked my chamber-door—I had feigned to go to rest; there was, therefore, no danger of detection—at least before daylight—and he promised to bring me back in two hours. Thus, led to commit the indiscretion of quitting, without his knowledge, the protection of my husband, of compromising my delicacy by so imprudent an act, I need not now say how justly that act has been punished—how completely I proved myself a dupe!

‘After a tedious progress over almost impassable roads, and through the mazes of a wood, I became exceedingly anxious to arrive at the monastery; but we halted, instead, at a mean-looking hut, where, two more priests joining us, I was then informed that, in removing me from my heretical husband, they complied with a decree of the church, and that my spiritual directors had adopted the present plan to avoid unnecessary delay or remonstrance.

‘I will not attempt to describe my astonishment—to depict my

despair—or to speak of the difficulty with which these authorised directors of my conduct had to contend, ere they forced me to comply with their determination. I heard, indeed, that he, for whom I would have hazarded everything but the safety of my soul, lay under the malediction of my church, and that there was a spiritual necessity for the proceedings which papal authority prescribed.

‘Distracted in mind, agonised by pain, I had neither mental nor corporeal ability to combat with my fate, if combat could have altered it; and, a mere automaton in the hands of power, was borne more dead than alive to the north bank of the Loire, where a small boat, rowed by my two conductors, conveyed me across the river. Landing on the other side, a calashe, attended by another priest, was found to be in waiting; he seemed to be of the lowest professional rank, and, walking, led the horse by the bridle, while the Confessor, dismissing the others, seated himself by my side. About mid-day we halted at a lone house in the forest, for I could no longer sit up; but, after a few hours’ rest, proceeded again, and arrived before the next morning at our final destination—a large ruinous building, where there was an apartment prepared. Pain and debility rendered me perfectly passive; and I was soon installed in that apartment, which, though somewhat decently furnished, was desolate from its spaciousness, and which I too soon understood was to be my home, my hiding place, the limits of my freedom, and for aught that I could tell, my tomb.

‘Contrasting its wildness and desolation with all I had lost—comparing its associations with the associations I was torn from—my grief amounted to frenzy. Sobs and hysterics convulsed my whole frame; my repentance, uttered and unutterable, amounted to madness. Madame Peltier, the duenna of the château, undressed and forced me into bed: she was a robust determined woman, and I had no power of resistance. Bodily pain superseded for a while the distress of my mind; and, before the dawn of another day, I had given birth to a daughter. Total exhaustion now stood my friend; for insensibility to my destitute state, to the contrast between a former scene of unalloyed happiness and the present one of unqualified woe, was the blessed consequence.

‘It pleased God to raise me from that weary couch, to restore me to my reason, and to console me with the sight of my child.

I was occupied from thenceforth in taking care of my treasure. They allowed me to be her nurse. She was for ever in my arms. Baptised according to the rites of the Roman Catholic church, I lavished no sinful fondness on a Protestant. She was the solace of my prison hours—the preserver of my senses—what would I not have gone through to present her to her father? Alas! he must not see—must not protect his own offspring. He was unworthy, in the estimation of that church of which I had made her a member, to enjoy the hallowed privileges of a parent. I gave her the beloved name of Marie. She was lively, robust, and possessed a fine constitution. The days lengthened; they became sultry; but my chamber was airy. The Confessor came to visit me in May. He had been there to baptise my child—to perform for myself the sacrifices of the church. He had extolled my submission; he had taught me that I was acting a meritorious part; and conveyed to me a few lines of approbation from the venerable Père Montcalm. Alas! they were written with a termulous hand; they were the sad evidence of declining strength, of age. Still they were infinitely soothing, for they helped to clear away those doubts which, until then, had distracted me—that, in breaking so solemn a contract as that of marriage, I was securing the safety of my soul. On this, the Confessor's second visit, he told me that my husband, satisfied with the reasons assigned for my withdrawal, had partly given up his pursuit; that he had returned to England, but not without putting in his claim for the St. Aubin estates, which were, however, contested by the heir-at-law—a male descendant of the family—to whom it was probable they might be assigned, unless I made them over to the church. He intimated that if I consented to endow a convent, and thus secure for myself and my daughter a suitable provision, I could do so most munificently, and leave a large surplus for charitable purposes. He concluded by saying that he would undertake to be my agent, and to establish my right to a distribution, which would obtain for me the security of ecclesiastical protection.

‘My silence, as I listened to this proposition, induced the Father to reckon on my compliance. But though broken in spirit, and deprived of my freedom, I had still the independence to assert my own judgment; and, having reason to suspect my adviser of avarice, I refused to rob my child of her inheritance, or to dictate, at so early a period, her choice of a conventual life.

But I offered—as these estates were mine for my life—to appropriate their early proceeds to the service of the church, provided that my little Marie and myself were allowed to remove to a particular convent I should name, and that I might correspond with my sister.

‘He replied that, without express permission from the higher powers at Rome (considering the predicament in which Sir Charles Trevillion was placed), he could not permit me to receive letters from my sister; but that, if I wished for once to write her an account of myself, he would, though at a risk, endeavor to forward one letter. As to my other proposition, he affirmed that it was utterly useless, as, these estates being at present contested, the only way by which I could rescue them from the grasp of the secular authorities was by voluntarily giving them up to the church. If, however, I would hand him over my draft on the agent at St. Aubin, it might be a trial of my authority there, and he would let me know the result.

‘The draft was worded, “For charitable purposes connected with the interests of the church.” In return, I was promised a supply of paper, pens, and ink, with permission to write one letter explanatory of my conduct to Marie.

‘My husband—my sister—if you have received that long letter, the explanation I was thus permitted to make, your sympathy is certainly mine; for the once-trusted Clotilde will not fail to be credited. The tears which blot that paper you will know to be the tears of sincerity, and yours will fall unrestrained for the miserable writer. Alas! I shall never see this: I shall receive from your hands no written proof of your kindness, for those who direct the progress of my salvation are apprehensive of your still-existing influence. They know that my heart is not yet weaned from the objects of its love!

‘I write beside the cradle of my darling. She is now five months old. I could describe her sweet blue eyes, the beautiful symmetry of her limbs, the daily proofs which she gives of her intelligence. I could fill sheet upon sheet by indulging myself in converse with my friends; but am afraid to exhaust my materials. Writing robs my solitude of its desolation; it makes me feel as if I were not so totally lost. The month of March is almost over; April approaches fast; the Confessor will be

here about this time; perhaps he may bring me news of my friends—of England—of my far distant son. Perhaps he may have received permission to remove me. At all events I shall acquire a supply of writing materials. What a value do I place on this indulgence! There may be some forms to go through about these St. Aubin estates. I have not executed any deed. Would to Heaven they had never been left me!

* * * *

'He is come, and I am more wretched than ever. My brain is on fire! my heart is torn to pieces!

'William, my sweet William, has been stolen from his father. Mac Cardwell! Father Austin! they are privy to this barbarism. They, the anointed servants of the Most Merciful, have the audacity to defend such an act. I cannot comprehend them. I recoil from—I abjure such cruel expediences. They talk of necessity; they say that my relative had no right to entail his vast property upon a girl; that my son, in case Augustine de St. Aubin should not make good his claim, comes in before his sister; that his doing so would render my marriage doubly a crime, as through my means an heretic would thus be enriched. They tell me that William, in order to prevent such a misfortune, is being brought up a Roman Catholic; that he must remain (until his principles are decidedly fixed) in the hands of Roman Catholic teachers, and consequently be detained at a distance from his father. His father! The son of that father to be brought up in a separate faith!—and I have promised so sacredly not to interfere! I have vowed, at the solemnisation of our ill-fated union, to respect the religion of my husband in his own person and the persons of his sons; while he bound himself by equal obligations to me. And he!—has he forfeited his promise?—has he restricted my privileges? Never!

'Perhaps he believes that I am privy to this scheme? Perhaps the blame of this heartless, this unprincipled bereavement may be laid to my charge? Fathers Mac Cardwell and Austin will be believed to be my agents. How shall I exculpate myself from so cruel a suspicion? What shall I do to restore my poor boy to his father?

'Another discovery! Father Austin is my cousin! He is that Augustine de St. Aubin, the person who contests with my children their right to the bequest of their relative. Were he

to persevere in his contest, I might, Mac Cardwell tells me, lose the estates even now. But, as a priest, he eschews litigation; and it is only to preserve them for the church—to prevent them eventually enriching an enemy of the faith—that he is induced to come forward. Can I not resign them at once? Can I not put him in immediate possession? The Confessor raises objections: he starts difficulties that I do not comprehend. But he has consented that I should write to Augustine. Oh, that he may consent!—that this property, one source of my woes, were relinquished for ever!—that my son were restored to his father!

* * * *

‘Augustine has consented. Lord of Heaven be glorified! I have obtained my desire. I shall be exculpated. I shall no longer be a party in such cruel proceedings. Were it the possession of a kingdom, would I not thankfully resign it, rather than that those I esteem should deem me so guilty—rather than that my son should be deprived of parental affection?’

‘We set out for Paris to-morrow. The deeds must be legally executed. Would that I could take my little Marie! Would that we could remain there in the same convent where I passed my own childhood! But no; it must not be. Augustine promises that our comfort shall be his principal object, after the just appropriation of the relinquished property to further the interests of religion. I must, meanwhile, return here: no matter, I am perfectly content. A full week I shall be absent from my Marie; but, by the end of that time, my son will be on the road to his father. My sweet girl is thus deprived of her legacy; but, by such a deprivation, her brother’s safety is secured, and her mother exonerated from the supposed commission of a perjury. Surely wealth is as nothing compared with these advantages. Surely the riches of an empire would not repay such a father as Charles for the bereavement he suffers. It would not weigh a feather in the scale with the honor of his wife. Why was not this alternative submitted to me before? Did they suspect me of parsimony? Was there any reason to believe that the father of my son valued an estate in comparison with his religion? that he would not rather William were a beggar than an apostate from his faith? Oh, my dear boy! I shall not witness your restoration. I shall

not see thee safe beneath the paternal roof; but you *will* be there. Ere many days you will enjoy the security of legitimate protection.

‘Every hour seems an age. I wish these deeds were signed—that I were returned to my cherub in the forest; but impatience is ungrateful. Thank God! it is in my power to purchase for my husband the return of his child.

‘Alas! I am for ever making purchases. I am buying, but I never receive—I never know peace. Where are—what I have heard of—the free gifts of God? How is it with the poor and the penniless? They cannot purchase. Do they, therefore, enjoy? It is hard to understand these contradictions. The Confessor does not explain; he attempts it, but I am mystified the more. I will not inquire of him again; yet, of whom shall I inquire? My mind is a chaos. Would to Heaven that it were enlightened! that God would bid it “be day”! They will not allow me a Bible; they suspect me of searching. I have asked too many questions; and the church, during pleasure, suspends information. I wish I could supply myself in Paris. But would not such a gratification be heretical? Would it not be for the satisfaction of a vain curiosity? I do not feel as if this were a term descriptive of my wishes; yet it is the term they use. And if I get a Bible, must I not confess? Ah! whither shall I turn me? what shall I do? “*Lord, I beseech thee, give me understanding!*”

* * * *

‘I am now in Paris: we leave it to-morrow: I have signed away the property: and William, they tell me, is on his way to his father. Celeste has had the charge of him. She is in future to be the nurse of his sister: I do not like this—Marie wants no nurse. Her presence will remind me of what I had better forget; it will bring Pendyffryn before my eyes. Happy, miserable Pendyffryn! Can it be possible that a spot at once so lovely—so much the abode of charity, of love, of every moral virtue—should have been also, for a time, the abode of guilt? Can it be possible that the confidence, the affection, the charities, that at one time surrounded me, were less the attributes of a pure religion than the concealments, the doubts, the jealousies, the sacrifices, which have since occurred? I am returned to the Forest, but not to my former abode. Celeste

met us on the road, and Father Mac Cardwell is gone with William to London. By this time he is safe with his natural protectors. They would not let me see him, yet he must have been at hand. Augustine, however, assures me that when my marriage vows are absolved—when I am the sworn inmate of some religious establishment—all such restrictions shall cease. Augustine is kind, but mysterious. I wish I had not met him: he has revived too many agitating recollections.

‘I have not yet seen my younger treasure. Peltier retains her until she is vaccinated: for that purpose they take her to some town. I am wretched till she joins me. I am dissatisfied for various reasons, and would rather have remained at the old château. It was not quite so lonely. The lower rooms were full of inhabitants: I heard voices in the distance, and had got accustomed to the attendance of Peltier. But I shall be easier when they bring me my child, and there is a garden to this place, where she will have liberty to exercise. That at the château was too public for us. Why such caution now? If my husband has ceased to inquire for me, if William is no longer in concealment, what can be the motive for secrecy?

‘I am not sorry to have Celeste: she talks to me of my boy; she tells me that he is the most amiable and intelligent of children, full of life, of health, of affection. Heaven bless her that she has encouraged the latter propensity! it will endear him to his father. Poor soul! I forgive her all her duplicity for the care that she has taken of him—for the love that she bears him.

‘The Confessor gave her his promise to write to her from London. He was to leave William in charge of a careful person there, who would deliver him up to his friends. Celeste is angry that she did not also go; she wished to witness his restoration. She is uneasy, but assures me that there is no cause for uneasiness—that the Priest dare not deceive. Surely she is right! He would not deceive—he would not be unfaithful—I don’t know: I am puzzled. Did he not teach me to deceive? Are his actions consistent? And why did he always betray a desire for money? Father Austin was not so. He never drained my purse: even now that I have resigned to him my property, is it not for the exaltation of his church? He himself is indifferent to gold. But Mac Cardwell had a mission to perform:

he had many missions: he could do nothing without means. He acted as the agent for others. I may be unjust by accusing him of avarice. Mother of Mercy, forgive the sacrilegious thought!

'This house is in a court, the walls of which are high, but the garden is teeming with produce. How I long for my precious companion! There is a smooth green turf: I shall see her playing about. The birds, and the insects—how much they will amuse her! She will become a child of nature. I shall teach her that nothing comes by chance—that everything is made for our use, and for our gratification, by her invisible Father—by an all-powerful Creator whom she must serve, worship, and obey; who is all-sufficient—whose service is happiness and freedom!

'Alas! my sweet child, can I say this with truth?—am I fitted to instruct?—am I instructed myself?—do I understand the term "*all-sufficient*"?

'I try to recollect the precepts of my mother—of our excellent gouvernante—of the Père Montcalm. But they are as if I had forgotten them: they confuse, they perplex me. Those of Mrs. Murray, which are of later date, dwell more on my memory. Is it because they are of later date, or that they are easier of comprehension? She obliged me to get off-book a great deal of Scripture. I could not shut my ears to what was before my eyes. I suffered a penance for my obedience to her, but was under the necessity of submitting, not only to the penance, but to the act for which it was incurred. It is strange how well those tasks are remembered. How accurately I can repeat much of the Gospel of St. John—that gospel of love—besides chapters of the Epistles! There are some verses of Timothy which dwell on my mind: they relate to the instruction of children. Can it be wrong to remember these things? Can it be heretical?—I hope not, for they are my food, my solace. I lie down in peace after repeating them. If I cannot sleep, they calm my restless thoughts. They are a secret treasury of knowledge fresh opened to my comfort. Has God renewed them in my mind for the benefit of my daughter? Celeste has heard from the Confessor: his letter is dated from London, but the post-mark is Nantes. It was to come so far, he said, by private hand. She is not pleased; she would rather the stamp had been London. Good God! can she doubt? I have pressed her to tell me; but she denies that she doubts: yet I

expected to have seen her better pleased. I expected to feel happier myself. But my nerves are so shaken that the slightest cloud on a brow, the least remarkable alteration in the expression or manner of those whom I see, affects me with terror.

'William, no doubt, is safe at Pendyffryn—why should he not? What motive could there be in detaining him now—now that those estates are relinquished? He will be the pupil of Doctor Bentley. I often recur to the conversations which took place with that good man—to the arguments which he held with my Confessor. I remember his denying that there was Scripture authority for auricular confession. I hope he was right, for there are many of my feelings I should not like to confess.

'It is a great resource to think over what then passed. Perhaps the short absence of my darling is a merciful dispensation, as it gives me time for thoughts of the kind. Alas! the scenes in that library are ever present to my mind: I hear my Confessor vindicate his creed: I hear Doctor Bentley refute his favorite doctrines: I remember the harshness of the one, the merciful tenets of the other. O, that I had such an opportunity given me again!—*that I had a Bible!*'

* * * * *

'I have had the opportunity: a Bible has been lent me: surely the gift is from God! It is strange—it is miraculous: a feeble old man labors in the garden; he is perfectly deaf, but his looks are intelligent; and once or twice when he caught me in tears, his eyes have been turned toward heaven with infinite fervor, and his hand raised as if to direct me whence help was to be had. I became interested in this old man, but durst not address him, lest Celeste might observe me, and he be dismissed—for she had told me not to do so as he was both deaf and dumb. But one day, in her absence, I surprised him alone. He was praying aloud in a spot the most remote, and held a book in his hand. That book was a Bible. I asked him by signs to let me look into its pages. He gave it, and told me I might keep it till morning; that it was the word of the Lord and *all-sufficient* for my peace. I took it to my chamber, and read it in secret. I knelt down, and petitioned that it might be to me revelation. It was revelation—I understood many things, and I grieved when the time to return it approached. The old man was deaf, but not dumb, as they

told me. When opportunity occurred I learned his story. He had been for some years a Roman Catholic priest, the suffragan of a strict disciplinarian—one who exacted to the utmost all Popish observances. He served him with zeal, and grew old in the service. But he was attacked with a severe illness, and was believed to be dying.

‘Priests stood by his bed, and heard his confessions. Absolution was pronounced, justification admitted, extreme unction administered, the anointing with oil, the sprinkling with ashes, in short all was gone through—no one form omitted; but, when everything was over, and the priests were departing, his *cure*—the steady exacter of ceremonies, the inflicter of penances, the advocate of justification—leant over his bed, and whispered these words in his ear: “Trust not in these things: they are not *all-sufficient*! Think not of the Virgin; trouble not your poor soul about the saints: cast thyself upon the Lord, the one only atonement! Believe in His ‘*one oblation, once offered*’; remember His words to the thief on the cross, and thou wilt be saved, if thou believest to meet thy Saviour in Paradise!”*

‘The sick man recovered. These words dwelt in his thoughts: he reminded the speaker of their import. But the latter denied to have used them; and accused him of repeating his own heretical ravings. The poor *cure* was dismissed, or rather he left his employer; threw off his vestments, and with them the errors of his religion; embraced the Reformed faith, and the humble profession of a gardener. A more devout and pious Christian cannot breathe the breath of heaven. He is everything to me. Oh! if my child were returned, would I have a wish beyond this place, except for the sake of her instruction? But she is not come. She is still at the Château: she is to remain some time longer in charge of the woman Peltier.

‘Am I deceived? Is she really there? Oh, that I could walk, that I could creep, through the thicket! that I could watch, night after night, in sight of her habitation! that I could get a peep of my treasure!

‘Celeste’s health is declining. I perceive that she is anxious. Poor girl! she fears for her life. She wishes to go home: her friends live in a village called Chinon, I am afraid that

* The above is an undoubted fact.

she will leave me; but there is no getting away, and her confinement is as strict as my own.

‘I have found a little map. It describes the road to Nantes, to L’Orient, to St. Malo. I will keep it very safe. If they should deceive me; if I should be the victim of avarice; if, instead of a religious expiation, Mac Cardwell should have concocted a systematic scheme for his own exclusive emolument, where is my obligation to abide by his guidance? Is it not dreadful to form a suspicion of any professing Christian? Is it not impious? Yet the old man’s story is true. His vicar could deceive—most horribly deceive! Should Mac Cardwell be false—should Father Austin lead me astray—should the venerated Père Montcalm be himself deceived—what remains for the miserable Clotilde? Could I convince myself on this point—could I think as this old gardener—I would scale my prison walls: nothing should prevent the attempt. Might I not claim the protection of my husband, yet not forsake the religion of my mother? He is generous; he is just. Under his guardianship my conscience was free. Oh! if what they tell me be untrue; if the story of the assault be exaggerated; if that blood-stained witness should be a misrepresentation—and my own truthful sister, I think, told me that it was—if my noble-minded husband acted from a sense of duty alone, not from pique or jealousy, what a dupe I have been! for how much have they made me responsible!

‘My Marie! my innocent, my helpless child! would thou wert safe under the parental roof, in free and happy England! Alas! I have forfeited the privilege of home; I have separated myself from protection; I have been duped into the voluntary relinquishment of my happiness!

‘Mac Cardwell has been here: I have been obliged to confess. Shall my innocent Marie ever confess? Mother of Mercies! how much is involved in that question! Guide me, direct me, my Father and my God! Thou, who art “of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,” preserve her purity, even as Thou art pure!

‘A stranger has been to see me—the same person who attended us to Paris. He says that my child is in health; that she is at the Château; but that there is no intention of returning her to me. I feel that I am deceived, and that treason surrounds me. This cruel detention confirms many suspicions that I would fain

have rejected, but which the contradictory answers of Celeste first gave rise to in my mind. Oh, that I could place my darling out of the power of these people!—that I could escape! This person seems compassionate: he offers to aid me. My money is gone; I have left myself destitute; I have parted with power. But this man knows who I am, and that my husband is rich. He seems to want money, for he lays a great stress on its necessity; and poverty may induce him, as much as compassion, to release a poor prisoner like myself, and to restore me my child. Yet he was, perhaps is, in the pay of these people, for they trusted him to attend us to Paris. He seemed disappointed when I told him that my property was gone, and not quite so zealous to befriend me; but this might be that he knows we cannot get on without money, and is afraid to incur the dangers of pursuit. But Nantes is not so far, and there I might be safe. Oh, no, not there! it is too near St. Aubin, I now recollect. There must be some other sea-port—no matter where: I could walk—I could hide in the woods. Freedom would give strength, and I can live very long without food: I could carry my child, and take with me hence what should suffice her for days. With my face turned towards England I should never grow faint. Would that I had not parted with all!—that I had gold! He says that we cannot travel without. There remain, however, some trinkets, and I can faithfully promise him a future reward. My mind is made up—my scruples are over—I am no longer a coward. He says that I shall see him in a fortnight; that it will take all that time to arrange for securing my child, and for our mutual escape. How shall I calm the perturbations of my heart?—how endure the suspense of that fortnight? The old gardener and his Bible remain. What a mercy that I was not induced to betray that poor old man! I was right: there could be, surely, no obligation to carry confession so far.

‘Yes, the gardener remains, and he leaves me his Bible. Blessed old man!—ever blessed loan! Oh! how such reading soothes my anxiety—how it calms, yet inspires me! What courage it imparts—what a tower of strength! Yes; “*the Gospel of Christ is the tower of God unto salvation for them that believe.*” What a solace is that! Again, we are told that faith is belief; we are desired to be “strong in the faith,” “to cast all our burden on Christ,” who is “the rock of ages.” God not only

permits me to rely on this strength, but he commands me to do so. How do I know that he commands? Because I believe—because I know that he has spoken—and I cannot believe without I know. Faith is belief, and faith has a large grasp, for it takes in the reason and the understanding. I see in the Inspired Word that God permits us to understand—that he tells us—that he has spoken—that he bids us “*ask in faith, nothing wavering.*” What a privilege is this! Oh, that I may have grace to use it as I should!

‘Some days of the fortnight have passed: the time draws near—the time that I imagined was never to arrive. How short in comparison with what I expected! But hope has winged the hours, and faith points to their conclusion.

‘I build myself a tower in my prison: I mount to its summit, and I see the road of truth, illumined by the light of revelation. What a fortnight has this been! What years of perplexities, distractions, delusions are pressed into this short space of time! How have they crowded, surrounded, but not overwhelmed me! My path is as clear as the day. I PRAY, AND MY PLAGUES ARE DISPERSED!

‘My child! my sweet Marie! shall I indeed see you again? Is it possible that to-morrow will re-unite us? Is it possible this stranger is faithful? Or, may he not deceive, as did others?’

Here was, indeed, a glorious vindication of the much-injured Lady Trevillion. How would Mary weep and rejoice over a document so precious! How much must it soften Sir Charles! Yes; Clotilde was undoubtedly the maniac of Saumur. I would send off her Journal without delay: I would relieve one anxious heart to the utmost of my power. The conclusion of that Journal would be a solace to the sister, even were the sweet writer not restored to her senses. It had evidently been broken off when she perpetrated that wild act of stealing her child, the issue of which was disappointment, detection, and madness.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It was now I sincerely rejoiced that Innes was at hand; for, though I had already prospered to a miracle, still my perplexities were innumerable, and to go on acting alone was quite out of the question.

Here was André, a snake in the grass—a thorn in my sleeve—a spy on my actions—an incumbrance which I knew not how to get rid of. Were I to accuse him of breaking open my writing desk, where now was my witness? Could I produce any proof? Bourke had gone off; and, as to the language-master, he would be sure not to betray his employer. The abstracted papers had been restored to their places. I could expect nothing but worry; and perhaps run a great risk in making an accusation which there were no means of supporting. Besides, one step injudiciously taken, might—as Bourke often warned me—undo all I had done, and check my proceedings on the eve of success. Ten months had elapsed since the incident at Saumur—time enough to transport Clotilde to the antipodes: and as for the child, though aware of its destination, we might not, without being legally authorised, have the power to withdraw it from the guardianship of its ecclesiastical protectors. But Innes, as I have said, was happily near me, and putting the Journal, with Mary Trevillion's manuscript into my pocket—safe out of reach of skeleton keys—I forthwith set out to consult with, and tell him my story.

It was, of course, only a very brief outline; but his zeal and indignation were sufficiently roused. I told him my plan of sending or going to Paris. He strongly advised, as a preliminary step, that we should put an end to the intermeddling of my courier or sketching-master, by laying an embargo on his personal

liberty—the circumstance of the writing-desk furnishing us with power.

I urged, on the other hand, the absence of Bourke, and the original deficiency of proof.

‘You should,’ replied Innes, ‘have taken down in writing the depositions of this witness, and have had them attested before the proper authorities. But we have the language-master still, and our first step should be to bring him to impeach Andre.’

‘And put that fellow on his guard?’ said I.

‘We should not allow him time,’ resumed Innes; ‘our safety depends upon promptitude. You know where this language-master lives: we should go to him directly, make him acknowledge to translating the letters, and immediately place the culprit under arrest. It may not be necessary to commit at once: could he be frightened into the acknowledgments we wanted, his future disposal might depend on your mercy. But to leave him his freedom even for a day—a few hours only—under present circumstances, strikes me as an indulgence which you might sorely repent.’

‘I sorely repent having anything to do with him: it was the most ill-advised step I ever took in my life.’

‘By-gones are by-gones,’ replied Innes, laughing: ‘it was, to say the least of it, a hazard; but we do not know yet. He possesses, it is clear, the confidence of the parties, and has means, within reach, to render null and void all you are doing. Sir Charles Trevillion should be written to without delay; but let us, in the first instance, secure you from the machinations of this precious artist.’

‘It will be better to write than to go to Paris,’ I observed; ‘we can send an express there to-day; and, soon as it is dispatched, I must fly to Derval. Not an hour should be lost in pursuing our lights, and finding Lady Trevillion—if she be still in this world.’

‘Not a moment that we can possibly avoid,’ returned Innes; ‘for these persecuting Confessors, having gone such lengths already, will leave nothing undone to secure their advantages, and save them from discovery. We know not to what crime the fear of pecuniary loss or exposure may yet lead them. To gain any point by appealing to justice, where an unprincipled Jesuit like Mac Cardwell, and an influential

native like Father Austin, are interested in our discomfiture, is no easy matter.'

'Sir Charles I hope may assist us,' I said; 'his right as a husband cannot be denied.'

'He is too well known here,' rejoined Innes; 'his presence at this juncture might do more harm than good. Besides, we must be stirring before he could arrive. It is so easy for those priests to put us on the wrong scent—they have done so already. I would rather work on my own way without Sir Charles; indeed, I doubt very much the policy of yet communicating with him—at least, I would not do so till our statements can assume a clearer form, and our position be better known to ourselves.'

'What, not let Miss Trevillion partake in our hopes? Postpone, till I know not when, sending her the Journal that she would so rejoice to receive?'

'I doubt,' my friend still objected with some seriousness, 'if it be kind to show hopes which as yet have so slight a foundation.'

'But we lose time. Let us at all events dispose of your courier.'

The poverty-struck lodging—as it had been designated by Bourke—of the translator of letters was easily found. And as that individual reluctantly answered our interrogations, his appearance might have been a study for Shakespere's Apothecary, or, 'to a fanciful view,' he might have stood in the shoes of that immortal manikin.

Innes, skilled in extracting information as well as in detecting evasions, soon gained his point, even so far as to obtain the first rough copies of the abstracted letters. With these irrefragable witnesses in our possession, we proceeded forthwith to a magistrate with whom my friend was acquainted, and having obtained the necessary authority, and the assistance of two acute policemen, we soon lodged Monsieur André in the Hôtel de Ville.

I shall not repeat the protestations, denials, or violent vituperations of the astonished artist, or depict his rage, or his attempts to turn the tables on Bourke, whom he accused of purloining the papers himself, and making his escape after implicating another. He was not, in the first moments of anger and surprise, likely

to make a concession; so we secured for him a small chamber in the debtor's prison; yet, afraid to trust such a slippery eel to the charge of his own countrymen, left the Scotch coachman of Innes, a right trusty warden, to keep guard on the captive until our return.

Having thus, for the present, incarcerated André, and so put him out of the way of doing mischief, we next held a consultation upon the chances of expecting further aid from Louise, or of following up the directions already procured, and going in quest of the child. This last seemed the more promising plea of the two, and calculating that, if not deceived as to the place, I could be back at Tours by the following morning—we resolved to set off the next hour.

I say we, for my friend would insist upon accompanying me. He prepared Mrs. Innes to receive the expected charge, and was waiting for me at the door of his house, when the idea occurred to each of us at the same moment, that we had no authority to demand the child from its guardians.

Here was a stumbling-block at the outset; and, after another consultation, no plan seemed likely to be attended with so little delay, so little noise, and more security, than that of obtaining an order for her being given up from André himself, who, when we returned to him to demand it, was obviously much more subdued. After sundry denials, protestations, and delays, he was brought to acknowledge that there had been a little girl, called Marie, *en-pensionne* with his sister, for the previous half year; and that she was then at nurse in La Vendée, where he was daily expected, as Mademoiselle had become so attached to him and Matilde that she was unhappy without either the one or the other. Had we not already been cognizant of most of the circumstances he told us, we never should have succeeded in getting the order. But, on finding that his secrets were already in our possession, he made a virtue of necessity, and signed the paper we dictated. A steam-boat was just leaving the bridge for Saumur; we threw ourselves on board; the tide was on the ebb; and our passage down the river kept tolerable pace with my impatience. We arrived at Saumur in good time, crossed the river, and hired a carriage, which brought us, before night-fall, to the farm we were in quest of. We found it a retired, but very pleasing spot, in what might deserve the

name of the bocage, though not in reality within that privileged circle. Some little children were playing in the garden, and I soon distinguished, by her beautiful fairness and her dress, the daughter of Sir Charles Trevillion. A girl caught her up, and would have borne her away, but she made some resistance; and I arrested the flight in an authoritative voice, which, as no one was near to protect her, the girl obeyed; and returned, as she was desired, to her place.

The sweetest and brightest blue eyes in the world were seldom absent from my thoughts; and, when the sweet infant smiled in my face, I should have known her amongst thousands as a Mary Trevillion. There were none of the elders of the family at home; they were all out in the harvest. Three little boys belonging to the house, with their *bonne*, not much older, were the only persons we saw; and, telling the latter that we were come for Mademoiselle Mary, she was ordered to prepare the child for a journey.

Such a command alarmed her exceedingly. Afraid of her employers, should she surrender her charge, but still more afraid of two stern strangers, the poor little *bonne* stood trembling and doubtful. I read her the order, which reassured her a little; and, after a few attempts to procrastinate, in hopes, I suppose, that in the meanwhile her employers would return, she equipped the dear infant for its journey. This was so far performed with ease. But when I came to take little Mary in my arms, in order to carry her away, she made such desperate battle, and cried so loud and so bitterly, that I really knew not how to proceed. Even Innes, more experienced in such scenes than myself, was not more successful in his pacific overtures. And while thus at a pause, the people of the house came home from their labours. Half a dozen tongues now set on us at once; but we produced our order, saying, that Monsieur André was unavoidably detained at Tours, and that we had come in his place to take away the child. The mother of the family made a demand for expenses, which I most willingly paid, not forgetting to commend her care as a nurse; which well-timed piece of flattery was so grateful, that the good dame offered to speed the child a few miles in the carriage, an offer we not only accepted, but encroached upon, by persuading her to come on where it was our intention to sleep for the night.

Next morning we dismissed her with a handsome gratuity, and separated mutually pleased. Mrs. Innes received our precious deposit, and so many young faces and affectionate voices soon reconciled the little stranger to its new home and novel associates. Having acceded to the more considerate counsels of Innes, and abstained from writing to Paris until there was something definitive to say, I now made up my packet for Mary, with a circumstantial account of our proceedings, not omitting the very happy result of our having recovered his daughter for Sir Charles Trevillion. The Journal, that transcript of a beloved sister's feelings—of her thoughts, as they sprung at the moment—would, I was aware, awaken the saddest recollections, yet at the same time impart consolation.

My little history was concluded with assurances of unabating zeal, and I promised to transmit her the earliest intelligence when I had any information to communicate. This done, and the packet dispatched by a trusty express—for, uncertain whether the Trevillions were still in Paris, we dared not run the risk of sending such a missive by mail—Innes joined me again, when we agreed to make one more attempt upon the fears and the avarice of André, previous to my setting forward, on the strength of Lady Trevillion's Journal, to traverse the labyrinths of La Vendée.

Accordingly, proceeding to the place of the artist's detention, we jointly taxed him with being privy to a traitorous conspiracy, which had robbed Sir Charles Trevillion of his domestic comfort, and broken the links of an union which promised so much happiness to both parties. We spoke in the severest terms of his own criminal conduct in purloining from my desk certain papers relative to the Trevillion family, thereby not only committing a robbery, but compromising himself with the guilt and conspiracy of others. Obstinate denial was all we obtained; and, finding him so hardened, Innes gave me a hint not to proffer any bribe. We told him he was to be transferred to a very different sort of prison next day; at which he changed color, but suffered us to go without making the slightest concession.

To wait the answer from Paris would be to hazard all chances of future discoveries; for André, however closely guarded, might find some means of communication with his

employers; and, indeed, the very circumstances of his arrest and detention were sufficient to create alarm, and might even peril our success. It was therefore decided between Innes and myself, that I should leave the Rue Royale very early next morning, proceed forthwith to Derval, and take up my quarters there like any other chance traveller. I might easily find an opportunity of speaking with Louise, and securing any documents in her possession relative to Celeste, when, acting upon what information they might contain, I was to follow up the pursuit of Lady Trevillion.

I was glad, when night came, to sit down in my apartments, and, 'nobody with me at sea but myself,' refresh myself with an hour's quietness. But it was not ordained—as Bourke would have said—that I should enjoy such indulgence; for, a very few minutes after reaching the hôtel, I was told that a person, seemingly on business, desired to see me.

Such a request, at such a time, was not to be refused; and a stranger was presently shown into my room. He came, as he said, on a mission of delicacy, and presented me the following lines:—

'If Major Melville is determined to go through with his present undertaking, the writer of this offers to aid him; for he is able to lead him, by a very direct path, where, to all appearance, the way is impassable.

'For the assistance thus offered, the friends of the *victim* must, in the first place, pledge themselves for the safety of their informant; they must secure for him a free passage, and safe-conduct to New York; and likewise supply him with a small sum of money—say three thousand francs—to keep him independent when he gets there. If Major Melville will put under his hand that these conditions shall be faithfully performed, the writer repeats that, within two days, his errand shall be done, and the *lost one* restored.

'One word, in conclusion. Should this not meet with approbation, Major Melville need not indulge the slightest hope of success.'

I requested the bearer of this extraordinary note to wait my return from speaking with a friend; and, obtaining his promise to remain in my room, I flew off with my prize to Innes.

'We seem to sail with the tide,' I said, placing the anonymous scroll in his hand.

He read it twice with tantalising deliberation, while I expected an instantaneous burst of applause. He turned it round, examined the direction, and took out his pencil, as if to make a calculation.

'Three thousand francs,' he observed, 'a modest demand!—three thousand francs, exclusive of the free passage to America. But if we take into the per contra account all you may have to encounter in the way of disappointment, the waste of time, the repeated—perhaps unsuccessful—journeys, bribes to induce information, rewards if obtained, I doubt very much if the demand is so exorbitant, and whether the first expense would not be the less of the two. I doubt—'

'Doubt no more, my dear friend!' I exclaimed, rather petulantly; 'for, were the demand made in Napoleons instead of francs, I should not hesitate for one single second. What is the value of three thousand francs in comparison with the peace of the Trevillions?—in comparison with the recovery of Clotilde? If it were only to save a few days', a few hours' suspense, I should think that pitiful sum well expended.'

'I trust that your means may ever meet your liberality!' said the kind-hearted Innes, grasping my hand. 'But stop one moment, Melville. You will not, surely, bind yourself by an unconditional promise?'

'Every moment seems lost till I close with this offer—till I obtain the promised instructions. Suppose Lady Trevillion were within one day's journey, and that our delay and over-caution gave the opportunity to transport her where she might be heard of no more! Nay, her persecutors might *remove* her beyond recall!'

'Suppose, my dear Melville, that we could enforce this promise without coming into terms! suppose your anonymous correspondent were no other than André himself.'

'I have thought of this already; and, for that very reason, wish to make a promise which cannot be recalled. We have André in our power by a very slender thread. I should rather come to terms with an anonymous correspondent than with a detected culprit.'

'Well,' returned Innes, 'the game seems to me in your hands; and I can only give my advice, neither to hazard a delay, nor to lose your chances by precipitancy. You must,

at all events, insist that a witness be present when you come to sign and to seal.'

To this I could make no objection, and, taking Innes with me, I returned to the hôtel.

We found the man waiting; of whom I inquired what was to be done, and where was my security for the fulfilment of the contract.'

'Sign this paper,' he replied, handing me some writing; 'you will see that all is fair and above board. Soon as it is signed I will take you to the writer.'

The paper merely stated that I bound myself to ensure a free passage to New York, personal freedom, and three thousand francs, in return for information which would lead directly to the lady I sought for.

'This will not do,' objected my friend, the cautious Innes; 'it is not at all a fair contract. When Major Melville actually recovers the lady, he will pay down the money, but no sooner. As to the American passage, that shall be secured in the first ship that sails after the writer performs his part of the stipulation.'

'I am content,' replied the stranger. 'If Major Melville binds himself to the fulfilment of your offer—personal freedom, a voyage to New York, and three thousand francs—I promise for my employer, that he will deliver the lady into your hands.'

Innes drew up the agreement, and afterwards witnessed, when I had signed.'

'Now sir,' said the agent, putting the paper in his pocket, 'I will take you, if you wish, to my friend.'

Innes accompanied us. We walked down the street; and ten minutes more brought us, as we had suspected, into the presence of André.

I pass over his protestations of innocence, his ingenious palliations, his assurances of having been led quite by accident into a knowledge and participation of the particulars to be divulged, and give, in his own words, the following recital:—

'It will be two years next September since I went, for the recovery of my health, to spend some months with a sister who resides in the south. The house she inhabits is in a remote situation—one of those old *châteaux* which belonged to the ancient *noblesse*, and which had stood many hard blows during

the sixteen years' war. But a few rooms remain in tolerable repair. There is a large farm, with some vineyards attached. My brother-in-law acts as steward to the estate, and rents a good portion of land. He is a republican; but makes no open profession of his principles—especially since the Restoration. About that period, some emigrant priests—poor wandering creatures, who had been seeking a livelihood in whatever way they could obtain it, and wherever it could be found—returned to the country. Truly, Messieurs, there was so great an influx of the same gentry, that neither Government nor Church could provide for the half of them; so that many were put to expedients. Some established small schools in the more remote provinces, wherever they found any of the old leaven remaining. My brother-in-law, though no friend to their order, gave leave to half a dozen of the better sort, who were not entirely beggars, to inhabit part of the Château. By so doing, he not only obliged his wife, who was a *religieuse*, but secured influence amongst the loyal or bigoted party. In return, these priests shared the doles, which they contrived to extort from a few pious dupes, with my sister—doles readily supplied by the superstitious to whom these ecclesiastics afforded spiritual consolation, as well as instruction to the rising generation. Thus making themselves useful on more counts than one.

‘Few or no families of the higher classes have as yet returned to that retired country; consequently my sister and her inmates have it all their own way; indeed, the neighborhood is so completely deserted that, but for the clergy, it would be insupportably dull.

‘You may judge, Messieurs, from my social disposition and acquirements, how very much I must have felt myself lost; and what a relief I must have anticipated from the tedium of rural life, when, one morning before day-light, the welcome sound of carriage wheels was heard to enter the court.

‘Starting up immediately, and throwing on my clothes, I was hastening down stairs, when my sister, intercepting me, checked my impatience.

“Go back to your chamber, André,” she said, “and keep in retirement; the less that you observe, the greater your safety. In two hours hence the carriage will be gone: you must not

acknowledge to have heard it. I forgot that your chamber was over the gateway."

"But whom does it bring here?" I anxiously inquired.

"I can make no answer," she said; "one word of curiosity, and this house is no longer your home. When *they* are gone," she added, putting her finger to her lips in a significant manner, "I may perhaps tell you something."

'By her very great caution, I suspected that one of our reverend fraternity had got into some scrape, and that his superiors had come secretly to investigate the matter. Our discipline was not always very strict, so that this seemed the most probable solution of the mystery. I willingly took Madame Peltier's advice, and kept out of sight till the inquirers were off. But no sooner did their carriage wheels sound a retreat than curiosity got the better of fear, and I descended the stairs to see what was going on. Except a morose-looking member, whom I always detested, none of the brotherhood made their appearance. My sister again cautioned me not to ask questions, saying none but ourselves had heard the noise of the carriage. This might, or might not be, as the clerical quarters were distant from my chamber. But, at all events, no good could accrue from disbelieving her.

'A fortnight passed over without the promised explanation, though I frequently jogged my sister's memory upon the subject. But she always silenced me by saying, that curiosity was a very troublesome propensity, especially in such households as hers, advising me rather to encourage forgetfulness.

'Now, a monotonous life was not very favorable to the course she recommended, and, though my recent accident rendered me rather dependent, I still cherished the most gentlemanly principles. These urged the necessity of not submitting to insult, and of avenging myself, which, in the present instance, I could not do more effectually than by watching Madame Peltier, and getting possession of her secret; for a secret there certainly was. I had seen her prepare, and convey out of sight, such delicate viands as are used by the sick; certainly not such as were partaken in public. One evening I remarked her manner to be unusually flurried, and, as she seemed anxious that we should all retire early to bed, I resolved to keep an eye on her movements.

'About one in the morning my zeal was rewarded. I detected her, heavily loaded with firewood, cautiously ascending a rather ruinous staircase, which led to a remote quarter of the building. The door on the head of that staircase was invariably locked; my sister assigning as a reason for such carefulness, that the apartments beyond were perfectly waste, and that that wing of the Château was in a dangerous state. It was not the first time that I had seen her, when she thought herself unobserved, mounting these interdicted stairs; neither was it my first attempt to follow in the same perilous direction. But the barred door at the top had ever impeded my progress. This night it was open; and the faint flickering of a distant lamp directed me onwards.

'Coming to the end of a gallery, and to the crevice whence issued that light, I heard, as I thought, the most pitiable wailing that ever met my ears. But Peltier's voice, sometimes loud, sometimes soothing, deterred me from venturing too near. I was, however, master of a secret; and next morning, on reproaching my sister for her unnatural reserve, at the same time assuming to know more than I did, she gave me a full explanation.

'The carriage, it seemed, had brought her a lodger; which lodger was a young French lady of distinction, married, unfortunately, to an English Protestant gentleman, who, being an heretical bigot, and a tyrant withal, had the bad taste to persecute her on account of her religion—recollect Messieurs, I only repeat the words of Madame, my sister—the poor lady had therefore no resource, if she would not turn apostate, but to quit her husband. So she had fled from his coercions, and was hiding from his search.

"'Being an immensely rich heiress," continued my sister, "the church has, of course, taken her under its protection; and she will soon be secured by conventual protection from the bigoted persecution which pursues her. The convent, no doubt, will be handsomely endowed. One object in her coming here was to get over her confinement, the poor lady being *enciente* when forced to make her escape. She has been a mother these ten days. You may judge what a weight is removed from my mind, and what I have had to go through. But, ah! André, we must not think of self when holy church is concerned. The lady was very poorly last night, but is better to-day."

"If she is so very rich," I said, "no doubt you will be amply rewarded."

"No doubt I shall be justly repaid, especially if the child remains here; it is a charming little creature, and sufficiently strong. I attend both with the tenderest care; but were they as poor as they are rich, my tenderness would be the same. I meant all along to confide in and employ you—to be, in short, the framer of your fortunes; but have not had time for a moment's conversation, as you may judge from all I have to do. Madame nurses her baby: it keeps them both quiet: they have no other attendant than me. We must use the utmost secrecy until she is legally rid of her husband, and legally possessed of her estates. Don't mention the subject to Peltier; he might not like you to be in the secret."

'I inquired if any of our clerical inmates were privy to the affair. She said not; but admitted that Madame had been accompanied by two clergymen, one of whom was expected to visit her again. He would probably come, as before, in the night; and I must take care not to be seen on the watch.

'Here, Messieurs, was my first knowledge of this mysterious transaction. You see it was perfectly a chance. But my sister's explanation surprised and delighted me. I felt myself, though poor, no longer dependent. Peltier would soon make me useful. The good benefactress of myself and my daughter was dead. We had buried Madame de la Currelle in July. Matilde lived on the bounty of one sister. I was indebted for a temporary home to another, whose cleverness I had always respected, but who, on this occasion, won my warmest admiration, both for the skill and the secrecy with which she conducted so delicate a business. I pressed for the names of the parties. She denied having been told, but I doubted her veracity in this respect; and, being easily hurt by the appearance of reserve toward myself, I determined once more to assert my own rights, by obtaining the knowledge I desired.

'By means best known to myself, but perfectly honorable, Messieurs, I assure you, the rank of the parties, their names, and the name of her property were soon in my possession. I traced her first arrival at Derval. I followed the Chevalier and his sister from Derval to Nantes, where I understood that a little boy had been stolen, and that splendid rewards were offered

for his recovery. Overcome by compassion for the doubly bereaved father, I determined, if possible, to find him his son, but unhappily failed of success.

‘Conjecturing that the priest who accompanied the lady might be privy to the concealment of the child, I returned home, determined, when next he should visit the château, to track his subsequent movements. Unluckily he had been there during my absence, and, though my zeal in the matter was lively as ever, my exhausted finances obliged me reluctantly to give up the search.’

‘Did it not occur to you,’ inquired Innes, ‘that the information you already possessed, if carried at once to the injured father of the child, would effect your purpose?’

‘I should, by so doing, have compromised my sister,’ returned the artist. ‘Therefore principle interfered to prevent the operations of pity. I certainly panted to restore the unhappy Chevalier his son. I would have travelled all over the continent to effect such a purpose. But I wished to do so without injuring my sister. In process of time I renewed my inquiries; for, by the reward being increased, I knew the child was not found; but, though unwearied in my exertions, I failed of success, and, overwhelmed by pity and disappointment, spoke on the subject to my sister.’

‘Alarmed, lest my feelings should get the better of prudence, and lead to an exposure of everything, she expressed herself most warmly on the occasion; represented the rashness of my proceedings; assured me that by interfering I might do the poor lady an irreparable injury, raise doubts as to the security of her present asylum, place her under less tender care, perhaps accelerate her removal to the Convent, and consequent separation from her infant. She urged the very influential position of those who acted as guardians to both; and warned me so awfully, if I meddled or made in the matter, that, however, reluctant to obey, I was forced to abide by her dictation.’

‘I remained at the château all winter. The lady was twice visited by her Confessor, but I saw neither the one nor the other. She never left her apartment, which was airy enough, but was unceasingly occupied in nursing her child. In the month of April this same priest came openly to the house,

his avowed purpose being to inquire into the state of our reverend inmates, to whom he gave some money and employment on a mission elsewhere, which would detain them at a distance for three or four days. Madame, during that period, was excessively ill. I believe she had received some news of a harassing nature; but the result of the priest's visit was a journey to Paris. I was now first employed in this mysterious affair, and obtained a sight of both parties. I was engaged to attend them for a week. Madame was with difficulty persuaded to leave the infant behind; and I heard her say, as I waited in the passage, that nothing but the hope of restoring William to his father could have induced a separation from her darling.

'This piece of information was mortifying to me. I wished to be the happy instrument of that restoration. But there was no use in lamenting my misfortunes. We travelled as fast as the poor lady's strength would permit, and remained only two whole days at Paris. She was most eager to complete the business which brought her so far, and thought the hour would never come for her return to our old château.

'Alas! Messieurs, she never returned. I conclude they thought it best, after her appearance in Paris, to change her quarters. Another forest residence was found, about four leagues farther south. I forgot to mention that an ecclesiastic of superior intelligence, and with an air more *distingué* than that of the usual Confessor, joined us at Paris. At La Fleche, on our way back, I was dismissed, and ordered by my employers to go home to my sister. But, anxious for the fate of the beautiful lady, I lingered behind, and, following secretly, never lost sight of her till she entered the court of her new habitation, attended by the priest, whom she called Father Austin, and a woman named Celeste, who met us at La Fleche.

'On reaching the château I was surprised to see my sister walking about openly, with Mademoiselle Marie in her arms. She took me to one side and said, "Listen to me, André: this is a nursed child, which I have been to Chinon to fetch. You will hear in the house that her parents live at Nantes. It would have been impossible to conceal her, when the mother was gone, especially as being weaned makes her so cross. You understand."

"I don't understand why she is not sent to her mother. Have you forgotten your promises to that unfortunate lady?"

"Andrè," said my sister, "you are much too inquisitive. The baby must be weaned and vaccinated also; after which, we shall most likely send her to her mother. If you do not like to be employed without further explanation, pack up your things, and return to Paris."

The alternative she offered was by no means convenient, especially as I had not yet been remunerated for my journey, and week's attendance on the priests and the lady; and, my only resource being compliance, I did so with the best possible grace. I attached myself to the interesting child, whom every one nursed, every one admired, and who soon became familiarised to a variety of faces.

But my thoughts dwelt continually with the poor bereaved mother—so young, of such parentage, possessing such wealth, yet immured in a prison, debarred the solace of her child, without a will of her own! These thoughts troubled me by day, and in the visions of the night. I made an excuse to leave home, and found myself once more in view of her melancholy dwelling. It was indeed a perfect seclusion—a lonely old mansion in the midst of the woods, surrounded by a labyrinth of trees, and shut up in an inaccessible court. But what, Messieurs, will not an heroic resolution achieve? I penetrated the labyrinth. I surmounted the walls. I waited patiently for hours in that gloomy enclosure, and at length, finding the object of my solicitude alone, presented myself before her. I was frightened to death, for she screamed most imprudently; and, had Celeste overheard her, I was undone. But providentially the latter was gone to bed with a headache, and the risk that I ran brought with it no evil.

Madame recognised, flew to me, and asked for her child: I said she was safe, and in excellent health. Her tears and her gratitude moved me extremely, and, after due preparations, I made a proposal which for some time had been floating in my mind.

This was no other than to aid in her escape, secure her little girl, and restore them both to their friends. For a few minutes she looked wild and perplexed; then, uttering a cry of joy, fell down at my feet. Judge, Messieurs, of my fears and my danger,

for it was impossible to allay the agitation I had raised, to moderate the eagerness with which she entered into my views, or to persuade her that she could not escape on the instant; at length she was convinced that we must wait a few days, for that it must take full that time to form any plan, or indeed ere I could find an opportunity of kidnapping the child. All that I suggested met with approbation: she promised that her husband would amply reward me; that every thing should be done to advance my fortunes and ascertain my safety. But, alas! when we came to discuss present resources, what an unexpected falling off!—not a sou had they left her—those self-aggrandising priests! Both for the present, and in future, she had resigned all her estates to secure for herself the possession of her child. Such was the pretext upon which she had been robbed; and such was the finale of my compassionate projects. You will naturally ask how she bore her disappointment. In a way which alarmed me dreadfully. I had no time to soothe—not ten minutes to spend in restoring her. Without funds I knew that we could not proceed. But it was hard to convince her of this—she who had never felt the pressure of poverty. She contended that her trinkets would take us to the coast, and that, once safe in England, she would be amply supplied. But was I certain that Sir Charles Trevillion would like my interference? How assure myself of the kindness with which a wife might be received, who had thrown away so splendid a fortune? In short, I saw there was an absolute end to the scheme; but I could not venture to say so at once—I could only promise to come back when I had considered it further. She bade me name a certain time: I was obliged to comply, for, without doing so, I could not have got off; having appointed that day fortnight, I left her somewhat at ease. I soon formed the wiser resolution of being guided by prudence rather than compassion. Heaven knows how it grieved me not to go back, when I pictured to myself the despair of the lady. But, as I have said, we were without funds. She had rendered herself dependent on the bounty of those whom, by her rashness, she had so greatly enriched.

‘I now come, Major Melville, to that part of my story which identifies this poor lady with the scene at L’Hospice de la Providence. And pardon me for saying that, had you dealt candidly at first—had you confided to myself the real purport of

let fall a hint of the kind; and, to avoid ten thousand reproaches which assailed me at all sides, I joined in the search for Mademoiselle.

‘Though my suspicions, as I have said, fell on the mother, yet the adroitness with which she must have seized on the child seemed to me no less than a miracle. Neither could I account for her having left her place of confinement without the assistance of Celeste, or her having found out, without a guide, her way to the château. But Celeste might be bribed—she might be weary of solitude—she might even repent; and one of the trinkets which Madame had talked of, would easily get them a guide. Were they to succeed in their project, it was up with us all; but of this there was no great probability.

‘Shaking off my companions, I pursued my search alone; almost sure of the track she would take, but quite at a loss as to my own subsequent conduct, if it turned out that my suspicions were just.

‘By daylight the following morning I proved myself no unintelligent prophet. Not that Celeste accompanied her lady, nor did any other guide, as I saw, except an old deaf and dumb creature of a gardener, who turned out to be a renegade priest, and on whom his church, I make no doubt, inflicted commensurate penances.

‘I had not, as I have told you, made up my mind; but the terrors, the entreaties, the tears of the fugitive, worked on my sensitive feelings, and, instead of compelling her return, I promised to aid her design. Poor lady! she was then not insane; but I found her provokingly obstinate. She would suffer none but herself to carry the child, and, therefore, our progress was fearfully slow.

‘Towards evening, we came unexpectedly near to a village, which no persuasions could induce her to enter. I, however, ventured on to procure her some nutriment; for, added to anxiety and unusual fatigue, she was absolutely faint from starvation, having had nothing to eat since she effected her escape, except what fruit was to be found in the forest. I procured all I wanted, and returned to our *rendezvous*; but not one of the trio were there. The old renegade guide whom I had seen at the château, no doubt, instilled in her mind suspicions of me. Be that as it may, I followed up the pursuit,

and overtook them before it was long; but this unfortunate deviation brought its own punishment: we were all overtaken in consequence. Some *gens d'armes*, perambulating the woods, remarked our party. One seized the old man, another the lady: I was robbed of all presence of mind; she, I believe, of her senses.'

'And did you not interpose?' I exclaimed. 'Did you not explain her situation? Surely these officers were the persons of all others under whose protection she should have been placed. They should have been employed to take charge of her—to restore her to her lawful protector.'

'Monsieur, you are unacquainted with the tempers of these police. They never attend to explanations. They would not have taken my word: I should have been lodged in a police-station with the old man, and thus restricted from being of service. If Madame had not gone distracted, they would have done the same by her; but, believing her mad, they only performed a duty by taking her to an asylum like L'Hospice.'

'And how, may I inquire,' said Innes, 'did these discriminating persons dispose of yourself?'

'I took care, Monsieur, not to give them unnecessary trouble. I saw at once that the fate of my companions was decided—that my detention could do the lady no good. It was easy enough, while they struggled with her, for one of our number to effect an escape; and I therefore hurried home to report what had happened, and, to avert, if it were possible, her horrible fate in a mad-house; where, in consequence of my promptitude, she did not remain many days.'

'You behaved in the whole affair,' I could not help saying, 'like a self-interested villain, and a despicable coward! But we want no vindications: proceed with the details of this iniquitous story.'

'They are short, but afflicting; my heart would bleed to repeat them. Enough that the poor lady resisted her captors to madness, and that the *gens d'armes* thought proper to lodge her at Saumur; a proceeding which, when reported to Peltier and my sister, rendered them nearly as mad. The former, furnished with ecclesiastical authority, shortly had her removed. She inhabited again the old apartment at the château, guarded as formerly, by my sister herself. Celeste, in the confusion,

went no one knows whither; but we heard before long of her death near Chinon. The child, as you are aware, was eventually placed with Madame Belenger; for whose care and affection I can conscientiously answer.'

'Is Lady Trevillion still at this same château? Has she not recovered her senses?'

'She is still, I believe, under the care of my sister; but I have not seen her these six months. When Mademoiselle came to Paris, I also returned; for she knew me so well, and my health was re-established. I ever have desired to serve Lady Trevillion: I wish to restore her her child. I now volunteer to place both in your hands; but expect, for so doing, the means of independence, because I incur the wrath of my sisters. They seem to be harsh, perhaps avaricious; but they act, on my honor, according to their lights, according to the best of their understanding, according to conscience; being placed much above the temptations of poverty.'

'But not above the temptations of worldliness!' interposed Innes. 'According to conscience indeed! The unction which all such grasping people lay to their pitiful souls, after their conscience has been stunted by long habits of selfishness! It is plain, not only that Madame Peltier's fortunes would suffer, but yours, and your sister's in the Rue des Postes, were Lady Trevillion to be released from her prison. In short, that a base and unprincipled family benefit largely by the heartless vocation in which you are united to labor.'

'I do not pretend to advocate the conduct of my sisters. I can only account for it by saying that they are *reigieux*; that they are entirely guided by their Confessors; and that, though they would not accept of a sou of your money, or be accessary to the re-union of Lady Trevillion with her heretic husband; yet that, as their time is their most valuable possession, if they devote it to the cause of their church, they expect to be remunerated for their trouble. But should they err—should there be any mistake—their Confessor is accountable, of course. They trust to his judgment, and he absolves them, if wrong.'

'How extremely convenient!' cried Innes. 'Do you place equal faith in this tempting commodity, absolution?'

'Confession makes no part of my creed,' replied André, 'or

I should like absolution well enough; not but that 'tis more suitable for the rich man than the poor, as Confessors are somewhat exacting at times. I am, Messieurs, a disciple of reason; and being, therefore, a friend to liberality, see things in different lights.

'I calculate, I discuss, I act upon principle: and not seeing, just now, that it is necessary to aid Lady Trevillion's detention, I choose to aid and abet in setting her free. But reason tells me that I must not follow the dictates of a humane disposition, so far as to incur serious distress—that I must provide for the consequences, as they may affect myself, by accepting at your hands an adequate provision; as also the means of personal security; for, without being a slave to the prejudices of my sisters, I am not such a fool as to brave the vengeance of the church. Three thousand francs and a free passage to New York are my stipulations: soon as these are secured, I pledge myself that you shall be guided to Madame.'

'As soon as Lady Trevillion is safe under my care, and not sooner,' I replied, 'your future provision and safety shall be secured.'

'Monsieur! is my word to be doubted?' exclaimed the disciple of reason, laying his hand on his heart. 'Does not my candor merit your confidence?'

'Reason,' observed Innes, 'might dictate the breaking of your promise, as it did the breaking of Major Melville's locks. What you dignify by that name I call expediency, a principle in which Major Melville and myself place no trust, and we shall therefore insist upon value received before paying down the stipulated sum.'

'There is no going back, Monsieur André,' I added: 'you have mentioned the names of persons and places; you have also given dates. We can find Lady Trevillion ourselves; not perhaps so soon as with your guidance, and therefore are ready to pay for it.'

'One word from me,' replied André, with the utmost *sang-froid*, 'and the lady is removed out of reach. Recollect, Major Melville, that I found an opportunity of writing to you this afternoon. I could with as much ease write to my sister: not that I desire to do so. Madame Peltier has never forgiven me for letting Lady Trevillion get into the hands of the police.'

She will, of course, resent my recent engagement with you. I was to have joined Mademoiselle Marie, and watched over her, until Sir Charles Trevillion should leave Paris for Rome: my delaying to do so has led to these consequences. I do not regret them—I wish the poor lady to be happy once more. I care nothing about her religion. If I can accelerate that happiness, it will add to my own.'

'We perfectly understand you, Monsieur André, and when your part of the compact is performed, there shall be no delay on our side.'

'*C'est une affaire finie,*' replied the artist, again placing his hand on his heart.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHEN we parted from André the night was far spent. I will not dwell on preliminary measures, but proceed at once with my journey, which was undertaken in company with the vacillating artist, of whom we agreed I was not to lose sight, with a Scotch servant belonging to Innes, and a trusty *gen d'arme* to render security more secure. Innes also insisted upon joining our party, and in this manner we set forward for Nantes. This was making rather a detour, but we thought we might require the authority of the British Consul stationed in that city, in case of opposition on the part of Madame Peltier.

Neither my friend nor myself had set forth on this service without much deliberation of thought, nor without taking into consideration the feelings of Sir Charles Trevillion, in whose affairs we had so zealously interested ourselves. He was, as I have said, but little known to me, and that little was rather calculated to check than to encourage the hope of meriting his gratitude by interfering with his concerns, however well-intentioned that interference might be. Nor, had not dispatch been vitally important, do I think I should have ventured such unauthorised freedoms with the gentleman whose character was so opposed to all encroachment on the part of others. But dispatch was important. Mary Trevillion could never forgive me—I never could forgive myself—if one hour's delay, one moment's hesitation on the score of propriety, should lose us the prize almost within our grasp. I knew that, in this shallow world, success was at once held the sure criterion of desert and the best title of approbation. So much depended on decision that I would not let myself doubt. We left Nantes under the sanction of the British resident Consul, to explore the patriarchal mazes of

the Bocage, and could not but lament that, amongst scenes so hallowed and so pure, such characters as André and his sister should have penetrated.

But our unwilling guide had not been quite candid in describing the situation of the château, which, though environed by woods, and very much secluded, deserved no such praise as belonged to La Vendée. We found it, however, before the closing in of evening, having traversed for some leagues over almost impassable roads, which well nigh broke a light carriage I had hired at Nantes. We left it in a lane when we came within sight of the building, while Innes, two *gens d'armes*, André, and myself walked silently on. I could see that my companion was frightened, and very unwilling to enter the court: despite all his bombast he had a dread of the church; neither was he very courageous on the score of his sister; but, fortunately for us all, no one appeared, and we entered the house without meeting a creature.

It was strange, almost incredible, to reflect that I was there, quietly master of a spot so hopelessly sought for. André pointed out the desolate quarter formerly used as the prison of Clotilde, where a ruinous staircase answered his description. This we ascended without interruption, and penetrated a long passage, from which diverged other outlets, flanked by apparently uninhabited rooms; after some turnings, a door fastened within arrested our progress. But André pointed to a slip on the architrave, where I perceived the handle of a bolt, when, pulling it resolutely, a loud voice from beyond called out, 'Who is there?' At the same moment a coarse-looking woman rushed forward. I let myself in, and she set up a continuous scream. From behind her, in the distance, a shadow seemed emerging. I could not believe it a substance, and timidly advancing, though only one step, it gazed on us with a mingled expression of curiosity and terror.

It was my first sight of the once lovely, the altered Clotilde; but even in that guise it would have been impossible to mistake her. Tall, wasted to a transparency, her head bent forward, her dark hair falling negligently down, her face all eyes—I recognised, in that heart-rending figure, the portrait so faithfully sketched by her sister; and, pushing the screaming duenna aside, advanced and addressed her in English.

With a glance of fear toward the woman, whom Innes now held, she shrunk back when I spoke; but, upon my repeating the short sentence again, she looked curiously in my face, and laid her cold hand on my arm.

'Lady Trevillion,' I said, speaking low and very gently, 'have you forgotten the language of England? I am an Englishman—your friend—the friend of your sister—of Mary Trevillion—I have a message from her—it is of love—would you not wish me to repeat it?'

'They have taken my child,' she whispered, in scarcely articulate accents, 'do you know where she is?'

'Yes, in Paris, safe and well; you must come with me to see her.'

'They will not let me out,' she whispered again, pointing to the window, which I saw had an iron railing.

'But I will take you out; I will convey you to your friends. Should you not like to come with me?'

This sentence was spoken in English; but believing, from the vacancy of her gaze, that she did not understand me, I repeated it in French.

'They have taken my child,' she whispered once more, 'I don't know where to find her.'

'But I know: I have seen her. I left her two days ago; she was well and happy. Will you not come to your own little Marie?'

A ray of intelligence seemed to light up her eyes, and she murmured the name I have mentioned; but that ray passed away in a moment. Her face became more ghastly than ever, and, pressing her arm heavily upon mine, before I could prevent her, she fell down at my feet.

Innes, meanwhile, had been struggling with her keeper, whose cries by this time had given the alarm. Madame Peltier and another woman rushed through the passage: they flew at me instantly, as I supported Clotilde, screaming at the top of their voices; but Innes, and the *gens d'armes*, who had concealed themselves till now, came forward and produced their authority. Peltier raved like a maniac, and stamped on the floor. I never before saw a female so outrageous. Taking advantage of the insensibility of the poor sufferer in my arms to bear her from so terrific a scene, I wrapped her in a cloak which Innes took

down from a peg, and carried her to the lower part of the house, my friend remaining to keep guard above.

The open air, the motion, some water thrown on her face, and other restoratives, presently recalled Lady Trevillion to life; but, alas! it was life without intelligence. I sent for the calèche, and watched by her side, while she sat seemingly unconscious of her change of apartment.

Meanwhile, the *gens d'armes* having locked Madame Peltier and her amazons in the late prison chamber, our operations below stairs were unimpeded, except by a few exclamations of wonder or curiosity from two or three children, and a young girl who had them in charge. When the vehicle arrived I carried my delicate burden into the court, not apprehending any opposition on her part. To my surprise, however, she shrunk back as if affrighted, evinced reluctance to enter the carriage, and, turning her melancholy looks wishfully towards the house, afforded the saddest proof I had yet seen of derangement. But while my persuasions failed of success, one of Peltier's children, comprehending her better, ran back to the kitchen, and brought out a small bird-cage which he placed in the carriage.

His simple expedient had the desired effect—her brow instantly cleared—she smiled, gave me her hand, mounted the vehicle, and seizing the cage, which contained a young linnet, held it carefully in her arms.

'I knew what she wished for,' observed the boy; 'she loves that little bird. It is ill-natured of mamma to take it from her ever.'

'And does your mamma take it from her?' I inquired.

'Yes, sometimes, when Madame will not eat; or when she is violent; but it is given back to her after a while.'

I now heard a screaming to us from above, and, looking up, saw the woman Peltier with her head pushed through the bars of the window. 'You are taking the lady by force; she is not willing to go. I do not acknowledge your authority!' she reiterated; 'I resist it: if my husband or any of his men-servants were within, no one durst commit such an outrage.'

'Drive on!' exclaimed Innes, who sprang to his horse; and immediately, obeying the word of command, we proceeded with care over the rough and narrow causeway dignified with

the name of an avenue, which served as an approach to the château.

My interesting charge was weak in body as in mind, and it afflicted me beyond expression to witness the aberration of an intellect once so fine and so sensitive. I tried in vain to recall her recollection, but it went no further back than the loss of her child. That one idea absorbed her—that one was the chord not quite broken of her memory; and, sometimes caressing the bird as if it were part or figure of that precious being, she bestowed upon it the tenderest regards, speaking as if it understood her, and never letting the cage out of her keeping.

We found André in the forest awaiting us, whither he had fled on the appearance of his sister, whose recognition he thus contrived to shun. Nantes being once more our destination, I would gladly have crossed the river that night; but, ere we reached Clisson, Clotilde could no longer sit up, and I was forced to lay to for some hours. The women of the *hôtel* were kind and obliging. I gave her into their charge, and kept guard myself in an outer apartment. Despite the threats of Madame Peltier, we heard nothing of her husband, and reached Nantes next afternoon without molestation. My gentle companion, quite passive in my hands and apparently insensible to her change of position, suffered me, as before, to lift her from the carriage, support her in my arms, and place her on a sofa. The extreme paleness of her face, and the morbid state of her feelings, alarmed me extremely. I sent for a physician, the most skilful in the town, who soon saw that a shock had caused her derangement. Of his hopes or his fears he would express no opinion, but prescribed quiet, with some medicine, and found me a nurse. When all this was arranged, and the patient in bed, I sat down in an ante-room, and wrote to Miss Trevillion.

Success had so far outstripped expectation. One child was snatched from the fangs of destruction; but the mother, though personally restored to us, was more lost than if dead; while her gentleness, docility, and tenderness—though that tenderness was bestowed on a bird—rendered her peculiarly and painfully interesting. In my letter to Mary I stated things as they were. I begged she might come and try the effect of her presence; but I entreated, in pity to Sir Charles Trevillion,

that he should not risk so hazardous a meeting. I repeated to her the words of the physician—that one shock had cost her her senses, and that any sudden surprise might cost her her life.

Innes took André completely off my hands, procured him his passport, and negotiated the money transaction. We then gave him his *congé*, and saw him off for America, when my kind and active friend returned to Tours, leaving me sufficient occupation in the watchful discharge of my duty at Nantes, where I resolved to await the answer to my letter.

That restlessness so usual in mental derangement was very apparent in Clotilde. She rose early, and spent hour after hour walking up and down her room, a practice probably formed when nursing her child, and which she persevered in, always carrying the bird-cage. A suite of airy apartments opened one within the other; and these I engaged, not only to render her seclusion less monotonous, but that she might accustom herself to move beyond a given space. At first, afraid to venture farther than our room, she merely peeped through the door; but, leaving her entirely to find her own way, she, after a day or two, dared to step over the threshold, then walked rapidly on, entered another apartment, took a circuit of all, and, so soon as she felt I was observing her, retreated with tremulous haste to her seat.

Nothing could be more affecting than her acquired feelings of fear, manifested as they were in every action. One day I came into the room, while she endeavored to open a window sash; when, believing herself detected, she clasped her poor hands, and, trembling all over, sank down on a seat. But I feigned not to observe, and, withdrawing the bolt, stepped out on the balcony. She looked wistfully after me, and I invited her to follow; some minutes elapsed before she had courage to rise, but at length coming nearer, she gave me her hand. I placed it within my arm, and led her to the rails. Some little children were playing beneath; she stooped forward, and watched them attentively; her eyes eagerly pursuing every rapid movement they made. Then, gazing most piteously up in my face, she repeated those touching words—‘They have taken my child!’

‘Yes,’ I replied. ‘It was very cruel of them. But she is

perfectly safe, and in excellent health. We must soon go to Paris and see her.'

She shook her head reproachfully, let my arm drop, sighed, and, catching up the bird-cage, held it tight to her bosom; then, murmuring a few plaintive words, she returned into the room, and recommenced her hourly task of walking up and down.

I would have given worlds, as her melancholy plaint was renewed, to induce a few salutary tears. But no! the poor maniac's sorrow was a blight—it had seared, but not melted, her heart.

My letters to Miss Trevillion were addressed both to Paris and Brussels. I told her, in all, where she would find the little girl, and repeated my resolution of remaining at Nantes until after I heard from her. A week had passed since, and I had received no answer either to my letter from Nantes or from Tours. I almost hoped that some change was taking place in my patient; for, though silent as ever, there was occasionally somewhat less vacancy of look.

Another morning she followed me to the balcony-window; some flowers in pots had been placed there. I got water, and watered them. 'If your little Marie should come here,' I said, 'she would like to pluck some of these flowers. We must try and preserve them in bloom.'

She smiled, took the watering-pot out of my hand, and began deluging the plants. Just then sounds of music broke on our ear, and we shortly distinguished a chant. Immediately the square was crowded with people, and a religious procession advanced.

It consisted of some high functionary in full-dress canonicals, a number of priests in their vestments, and the members, young and old, of a college, forming altogether what is called by the profane a *spectacle*.

Clotilde turned pale. She let the watering-pot drop, and, uttering a cry of alarm, fled trembling to the inner apartment.

'Fear nothing, dear Lady Trevillion,' I said. 'Rely upon me. I am your friend, your protector. These priests shall not molest you.'

'Oh, save me!' she exclaimed, falling on her knees. 'I

am not mad—I will not run away—I have given them all. They have killed poor Celeste. But you are not one of them; you are an Englishman.'

'Yes,' I replied, exceedingly pleased to recognise a slight trait of reason. 'Yes, I am an Englishman—your relation—the cousin of Mary Trevillion! I have found out where they concealed your poor child. We shall all be so happy when she is once more with you, and when we return to England. There are no old châteaux there, where you can be hidden from your friends: no prison chambers such as you have been immured in. Should you not like to come with me to England?'

'We were on our way,' she said. 'I was taking home my child—they stole her away: I forgot how it happened; can you not tell me?'

'I can. You got off from Celeste. The old gardener assisted you, you reached the château, got into the house, and found your child in her cradle.'

'No; it was Jerome,' she said, seeming very much interested in my explanation.

'Well, Jerome found her for you, and no one perceived him while he stole her away. Then you went into the woods and hid there in the day time. You ate cherries, or plums, or whatever you could find; and you slept under the shade of the trees.'

'I had a little cake,' she said, still following up the train of remembrance, 'and my baby ate of it.'

'I am glad you had a cake, for cherries and plums might not have agreed with her—did she eat it all?'

'It was a very little cake: I soaked it in the stream. Oh!' she continued, sighing as if her heart would break, 'I wish I were back by the side of that stream!'

'You shall see streams in England as clear and as cool, and your dear little girl shall run by your side.'

'I will carry her in my arms,' she said, with one of her most melancholy smiles. Then, recollecting the bird, added in a tone of alarm, 'But where is the cage? Oh, where have you left it?'

'Come and see,' I replied, taking her hand. We went back to the balcony: all was safe there: the little bird was pluming its wings in the sun. She snatched it eagerly up, and spoke to it for some time in her usual indistinct murmuring accents. I felt certain that she associated the idea of this bird with that,

of her child, of whom she raved so continually; but, as I tried to comprehend these indistinct murmurings, a travelling carriage entered the square, and drove at full speed to our hôtel. She also heard it, and trembled, but every sudden noise had the same enervating effect.

‘What if this should be Mary?’ thought I; and, almost trembling myself, led her instantly back to the farther apartment. She observed that, in doing so, I was more hurried than usual, and, looking timidly in my face, asked if they were coming.

‘Whom do you mean?’

‘Mr. Austin and the Confessor—Father Mac Cardwell. But I will not confess—I cannot confess—they ask me cruel questions—I will not answer them again.’

She was pallid with fear, her features almost convulsed, her eyes staring wildly.

‘There is no such person,’ I said, ‘as Mr. Austin. You mean Augustine de St. Aubin—him to whom you resigned your estate—him who assumes to be heir-at-law to your relation.’

She hesitated for a minute, as if trying to recollect herself then said very quietly—‘Yes, Father Austin! He promised to give me back my child; but he could not, she is dead. The Confessor left her soul in chains; but Augustine released it. She is not with me in likeness of my own little girl, but you may see her fluttering about. As soon as I die she will be an angel in heaven.’

Such expressions as these explained what was before inexplicable. She believed the green liunet to be the soul of her child, as Father Austin—alias Augustine—had pretended; and I recollected, while she spoke, that Bourke had told me some story of going a pilgrimage with his father to release his mother’s soul, which he verily believed to have seen, like a bird on the wing, emerge from behind the high altar of a half-darkened chapel, amidst incense, and odors, which confused (as they were meant to do) both the faculties and sight. A dreadful exhibition of blasphemy, which, had I not heard it from another, would never have occurred to my mind.

Meanwhile, hurried steps without on the lobby, the opening and shutting of several doors, plainly bespoke an arrival. I had engaged the suite of rooms in that wing of the house; I knew

that no strangers would be permitted to intrude; and, with Mary Trevillion full in my thoughts, I attempted to disengage myself from Clotilde.

But this day, for the first time, she desired to retain me, and, pressing my arm, entreated I would stay. 'They will come! They will take me again!' she cried, covering the cage with her shawl.

At that moment the door slowly opened, and Sir Charles Trevillion stood gazing on his wife. But her face was hidden in the shawl; she did not see who was there. I implored him, by a sign, to retreat; and his sister, who stood behind, seconded my wishes by drawing him toward herself, and closing the door.

Clotilde's female attendant, aware of who was come, now waited on her patient, and the former no longer resisted my leaving her.

I immediately sought the justly anxious husband, and found him pacing the apartment in a most excited state of mind. But he came forward, seized my hand, uttered an emphatic 'God bless you!' and, throwing himself on a sofa, burst into tears. Mary, pale as death, and scarcely less agitated, approached with the child, saying, in her own placid manner, 'May we not hope much from such a restorative as this?'

'Yes,' I replied, 'if anything can restore her, it will be such a sight. But caution must be practised—we must do nothing rash.'

'Does the physician give no hope?' cried Sir Charles in agony. 'Does he not reckon on change of scene—on the soothing presence of her friends?'

'He dreads any sudden change, but reckons on the happy circumstances in which she is now placed, with the influence of quietness and time: above all, he hopes something from the presence of her child.'

'Does she remember no one else?' inquired the sensitive husband.

'The loss of her little girl was the latest of her misfortunes. It was the shock that first upset her reason; consequently, it is the one which fills all her mind. At present she has few other recollections, though within these two days there are some mystic

glimpses of the past, which, if tenderly encouraged, may assume a form more definite.'

While I spoke Clotilde's nurse knocked at the door, and requested I would come to Madame, who was getting extremely uneasy.

'Oh, take her this treasure,' interposed Mary; 'do not prolong her anxiety, if it is possible to be relieved.'

Adopting her advice, I received the little girl in my arms, and ventured, so burthened, into the presence of her mother.

She was sitting on a stool, rocking to and fro; having suffered the linnet to escape, which now flew beyond her reach; and whilst her eyes wildly followed it from window to window, she uttered the most piteous lamentations. I brought the little girl immediately before her, but she did not perceive her. Every attention was given to the bird.

'Open the casement,' I said, in an under-tone to the nurse; 'let the linnet free.'

She did as she was desired—opened the farthest casement at top—and at that moment, when the impatient flutterer darted out of sight, I knelt before the mother, and presented her her child.

Who may describe the varying expression of that maternal face, or imagine the secret workings of that maternal bosom, as the little girl, still supported by me, was laid tranquilly upon her trembling knees? Afraid to breathe, to touch it, or to move, lest the beautiful vision should vanish from her sight, she gazed on it in silent wonder, until the playful little creature, seizing a long lock of the mother's dishevelled hair, twisted it around her tiny fingers, and laughed exultingly.

Did a touch, so conveyed, thrill to that mother's heart? Did nature recognise that delicate appeal? Or did the lively act the animated smile, recal to mind the likeness of her lost one?

They surely did. Recollection was awakened—feeling renewed. She looked in my face with an expression perfectly intelligent, clasped her recovered treasure to her breast, and sank upon her knees.

I endeavored to raise her, but she resisted my efforts. 'You have brought me back my child,' she said; 'I did not believe

you: I thought she was dead. My child!—my child!—you've brought me back my child.' Then raising her tearful eyes to heaven she poured forth a prayer, so fervent, so distinct, so rational, that every syllable was heard in the next room; and Sir Charles, believing her to be convalescent, no longer able to resist an impulse of affectionate impatience, suddenly opened the door, and rushing forward, threw himself also on his knees, and clasped her to his bosom.

By this act of precipitation everything was undone. Her senses were again scared away, and memory, on which a faint light had just begun to dawn, was once more plunged into chaos. Incapable of recognising in her husband any other than some ruffian come to carry off her child, she pushed him away, sprung upon her feet, and, darting past me to the door, crouched down in the farthest corner of the passage, almost smothering the poor terrified infant in her eagerness to hide it.

Sir Charles stood aghast! He had formed no idea of her appearance, or of the extent of her malady—he had entertained no fears for her recollection; and even now, while she averted her face, and reiterated her cries, he believed that she knew him, and that his presence was the cause of her terror. I seized him by the arm, and almost drew him to the door, saying to his sister, whom I pitied from my heart, 'Your brother has undone all—he must not show himself again.'

'It is you, sir, who have to answer for everything,' returned Sir Charles in menacing accents; 'it is you who have deceived me. Why was I deceived? Why was I not warned of her hatred? Why was I let to come here?'

'We will speak on this mistaken subject another time, Sir Charles! At present, our object is to counteract the mischief; I will send for the physician. Meanwhile, rest assured that you were not known; that Lady Trevillion took you for a stranger come to rob her of her child.'

Not waiting his reply, I returned to Clotilde, whom I found it impossible to tranquillise. She heard nothing that was said; she would not rise from the floor, nor release the poor infant from her agitated embrace, until the arrival of the physician, who compelled her.

A fever ensued, which menaced her life, and entirely deprived

her of consciousness. Mary, unrecognised, nursed her unceasingly; and if this most devoted of sisters had not been known to me before, her tenderness, her resignation, the depth of her feeling, and the piety of her mind, would have subjugated my heart a thousand times more, than when, in the bloom of health, of beauty, and of early youth, she won it in my native country.

Never was grief more bitterly expressed than in the wretched aspect of Sir Charles Trevillion, or in the few words that he uttered. Once, and but once, he went to the bedside of the motionless Clotilde; but the sight of that death-like face, of those unmeaning eyes, the rigidity of the features, the rapid movement of the lips, and the incoherent murmurings that issued from them, drove him away nearly in an equal state of derangement. He never sought his bed—he took no refreshment—he spent every moment in the ante-room. One of the first physicians in Paris was sent for, but he could only approve of what we had already done, and say, like those of Nantes, that the complaint was highly alarming; that its progress would be slow; and that it was impossible, at that stage, to form an opinion.

It was in this scene of misery that I first became acquainted with the brother of Mary Trevillion, or had an opportunity of appreciating those qualities which grief and disappointment unreservedly display.

Perfectly moral, with the strictest sense of rectitude, a high veneration of religion, a strong conviction of its efficacy, and an obedient servant of God, he fell short of his sister in those heavenly attainments, which, even in a terrestrial state, fitted her for celestial communion. With him, the kingdom of heaven was to come; with her, it had come. He, though bearing misfortune like a man, was more courageous than resigned, and, feeling his stripes more as an injustice than a desert, believed himself submissive because he did not rebel, without remembering that through all there was mercy. She, on the contrary, accepted the mercy; acknowledged that the stripes were deserved; and, instead of complaint, blessed God that no more was exacted. The one lamented for himself, the other for his fellow-sufferers; and, while watching by the side of her adored Clotilde, whose life hung upon a thread, it was in what way

to render the impending blow lightest to him—not how she might sustain it herself—that occupied the thoughts of Mary Trovillion.

‘It is a cruel fate,’ murmured Sir Charles, ‘which thus gives us back our lost one, only that we should lose her again. Oh! if thus to be bereaved, why was she ever recovered?’

Mary, instead of murmurs, poured forth her thanks. She looked on the short restoration of her sister as an especial favor; she was grateful that the hand of affection might close the eyes of her beloved; she only dared to entreat that one lucid interval might be allowed at the last—one word of peace, to soothe the regrets of the survivors, and assure them that the departing spirit was passing from darkness into light.

Three tedious weeks—weeks spent without one cheering ray of earthly hope—came to an end before Clotilde began to exhibit any of those changes that were so anxiously looked for. Even her eyes, wide awake, were never seen to close; but, on the last evening of the third miserable week, their lids dropped down, and such extreme languor ensued, that little else was anticipated than total extinction. Her sleep—if sleep it might be called—appeared like that of the grave; nor did the medical attendants venture to express a hope. But, after lying in this state of torpor for many hours, those heavy lids were once more raised, and the late vacant eyes gave token of intelligence.

Mary retreated out of sight, and beckoned me to take her place. It was the first time that I had seen a perfectly tranquillised expression on the face of the invalid; it was the first time that her sweet voice returned a rational answer to my inquiries.

‘Yes,’ she said, ‘I have had a blessed sleep, and been so happy! Affection has ministered to soothe my pain; angels have visited me.’

The physician now interposed, prescribed a cordial, and forbade all conversation until her strength should be renovated.

‘One hour’s more sleep,’ he said, ‘after this medicine, and I shall rejoice to hear you speak, and to answer your inquiries.’

She thanked him, swallowed the draught, turned herself from the light, and was soon sleeping like an infant.

Mary left the room. I followed, and found her in the arms of her brother: they were weeping on each other's necks. Such tears should flow uninterruptedly, and I was turning away, when Sir Charles recalled me.

‘Melville!’ he cried; ‘My friend—my brother!’

I flew to him. He wrung my hand: he endeavored to add more, but could not. Then, disengaging himself from his sister, he placed her hands in mine; and saying, ‘She will reward you!’ left us to ourselves.

as a man, she still feared him as the appointed agent of his church, selected to work for her interests, and immolate victims on her shrine.

It was while under the influence of fever that she made a sort of confession to Louise; and we could collect, amid her complex vindications of self and accusations of others, that she would have made atonement for her participation in the cruelties of her employers, by acknowledging everything to Sir Charles Trevillion; but was fearful, as she expressed herself, of selling her precious soul by betraying a minister of the holy Roman Catholic Church, especially into heretic hands; yet she gave into keeping of Louise that journal of her lady, which must, one day, elucidate all his deceits; and she named Toulouse as the place where William was likely to be found, should the Confessor not have restored him, as he promised.

Sir Charles would fain have accompanied me to Toulouse. But his sister united her efforts with mine, and we persuaded him to relinquish the project. I, as a personal stranger both to Mac Cardwell and Doughty—the latter of whom Celeste implicated in every plot of the former—was more likely to prosecute inquiry without exciting observation. Added to which, the parting from her husband, so soon after their re-union, might be too great a trial for the feelings of so fragile a creature as the invalid.

CHAPTER XXVI.

ARRIVED at Toulouse, I spent three days in the town, and three more in the neighborhood, to very little purpose. But, at the end of the week, I heard a story of a trial which had occurred at Marseilles about nine months before, and which, had not Sir Charles and his sister been travelling in Germany, consequently not in the way of seeing local newspapers, might have led their inquiries again to that place.

Two travellers, as it appeared, waiting for the sailing of a vessel, had called at the shop of a jeweller, and offered some valuable trinkets for sale. The jeweller, for reasons best known to himself, having examined the articles, and shown the strangers very politely into a private sitting-room, slipped out for a minute, and sent for the police, on the arrival of whom he charged his two astonished visitors with robbery, under circumstances of a very aggravated nature. He stated that the trinkets thus offered for sale were formerly manufactured by himself—that they were since supposed to be wrested from the person of a deceased lady, whose friends had offered large rewards for their recovery.

One of the two persons thus detained by the jeweller spoke French very fluently: the other neither understood nor could speak it. The first had, therefore, a great advantage while protesting his innocence, and accounting for the situation in which circumstances placed him.

Journeying towards Marseilles, with the purpose of sailing for Rome, he had chanced, he said, on his companion at an inn. They were countrymen, bound for the same port, and sailing in the same vessel: it was natural they should continue together. In some respects they had both one object in common

—a journey, connected with religious purposes, to Rome. The tale his companion told him was that a pious female devotee was sending these jewels as an offering to her favorite saint; and that the bearer had permission, should illness or other casualty occur on the road, to dispose of a small part for his own immediate necessities. In offering them for sale he meant to give the buyer a choice, but only to dispose of what might pay his way on. The speaker again denied any knowledge of his companion, except from having accidentally encountered him on the road.

The jeweller thought it not a little extraordinary that any devotee should trust so rich an offering into such ignorant hands, or send a person on a foreign mission who knew no language but his own.

He was told that the bearer of the jewels was a confidential servant of their owner; that his passage had been taken in a vessel bound for Leghorn, where he was to be received by her friends; but that the vessel, getting damaged, had put into Bourdeaux; whence, there being no other about to sail for the Italian states, he lost no time in journeying to Marseilles.

This explanation by no means satisfied the jeweller. He believed that the man who professed ignorance of French, perfectly understood all that went on; as might be seen in the expression of his countenance, and anxious attention, whilst the priest made his statement. It was, therefore, no vindication in the eyes of his accuser that, when the interpreter took his examination, he corroborated, word for word, all that was said for him by his companion.

In short, notwithstanding their solemn protestations of innocence, the two travellers were committed to prison, where they were incarcerated some time, waiting the arrival of a witness—one of the sailors saved from the wreck, and who was a native of that neighborhood.

This man had already appeared in evidence at the memorable trial in Cornwall: he had often repeated to his friends at Marseilles the particulars of that strange occurrence; and, on being brought forward, he immediately identified Doughty as the person implicated, and in the person of his companion he recognised the priest to whom the prisoner owed his acquittal.

This providential discovery caused a violent sensation in the

city: all Marseilles was in an uproar. And, when the day of trial came on, the prisoners found themselves in a perilous situation enough. They had now an ordeal to go through, very different from that which they had so triumphantly evaded in England. Here was no special pleader to take up their cause; no popular feeling excited in their favor. Strangers in a foreign land, they could rely only on their innocence for their defence; and Doughty, on his own showing, as the confessed possessor of the stolen casket, was condemned to the galleys for life. Mac Cardwell, however, being a priest, and having letters to influential persons at Rome, contrived to get himself transferred to that city.

It was remarkable that, throughout many weeks of imprisonment, during the whole of the trial, nay, at the very hour of condemnation, Doughty should refrain from implicating the priest. On the contrary, he adhered to the statement of the latter, persisting that they had never known each other until their accidental meeting at an inn on the road. Totally under the dominion of the hypocrite, whose only object at the moment was self-preservation, this wretched man, while he sought to vindicate his betrayer, only the more deeply implicated himself.

At his daily task in the docks, manacled and degraded, he wore a constant air of defiance, and had the appearance of one who encouraged some authorised expectation of a speedy release.

I found him chained to a fellow-laborer, possibly less guilty than himself, working out his time at the most slavish, the most humiliating of all manual labors—a gazing stock for scoffers, a mark for curiosity—reduced to sullen despair, but morose and unsubdued, as if he were suffering unjustly.

On my first addressing him—a privilege which he knew I must have obtained from the authorities at Marseilles—a sudden flash of triumph gleamed from his dark eye; but when a few words explained that my mission was not one of release, he relapsed into gloom, and it was some time before he would answer me a word.

I was not, however, repelled by his surliness, for he held in his keeping the secret of William Trevillion's retreat. But I durst not avow the real motive which led me to visit him, as I

knew that he would have stipulated for his own freedom as the price of any information. My inquiries were, therefore, confined to Mac Cardwell, on which subject alone I found he might be moved. And, whetting his indignation to the utmost of my power, he soon broke out into the most vindictive accusations against his former colleague, who had seduced, betrayed, and deserted him; and whom he in turn—especially when informed that Lady Trevillion was now with her friends, and everything known—was as ready to betray and desert.

Of course, in referring to the subject of the casket, he vehemently denied having taken it from the person of its owner. A female, he said, clung to a rock; the wind at the time was blowing a hurricane, and the waves dashing over her: he endeavored to reach, in order to save her, but the violence of the current prevented his efforts. She threw herself forward and fell: no human power could then have rescued her. She was borne away in a moment. He saw some other body, and did his utmost to grasp at it; but, this effort also failing, he gave up his vain attempts, and was struggling to regain the shore, when some glittering object was washed on before him. He seized what proved to be a richly-chased casket, which, for present security, he hid in a cavern, and rushed back to the shore. Mac Cardwell, however, as it chanced, had seen the treasure in his possession, and afterwards induced him to retain it. No good purpose, he said, could possibly be effected by resigning it into the keeping of the magistrates, or into the coffers of the king. But the Church of Rome was sustaining a great struggle; she was at immense expense in furnishing missions to preserve her religion intact from the base attempts of an extirpating enemy. One half of the treasure so miraculously found might, like the draught of the fishes, feed hundreds of hungry souls; and bring a blessing on the other half, though it rested in the hands of the donor.

In consequence of this representation, the casket was carefully buried in a cellar at the post-office, where prudence obliged them to leave it for the present, nor was it until about the time of Lady Trevillion's return from Bath, that Doughty ventured back for the purpose of disinterring his valuable deposit. Mac Cardwell, at that period, also revisited England for a short time, Father Austin alone being privy to his return. From

Celeste they gleaned all the information that was wanting to facilitate the working of their plot. Doughty had remained in Cornwall to sail along with their victim, as a precautionary measure, should Sir Charles change the plan of his journey. He also took charge of the jewels; and, in order to aid Mac Cardwell the better, and elude recognition, he afterwards adopted a clerical disguise. It was he who led the carriage which dragged Lady Trevillion from her friends; who listened unmoved to her cries and entreaties; and who, lastly, performed a principal part in the as cruel abduction of her son.

Accompanied by Celeste, they throw themselves and their prize on board a small fishing smack which was hired for the purpose. On reaching L'Orient, they found a vessel weighing anchor for Lisbon. But Lisbon was only a temporary hiding-place. In the course of three months they brought their little charge into the neighborhood of Po, where Celeste had some relations. There he whiled away the hours until summoned by Mac Cardwell to join him at La Fleche. Celeste was given to understand that the poor infant was to be returned to his father, while the care of Lady Trevillion devolved upon her. But Mac Cardwell had no such purpose in view as parting with William Trevillion; though his detention, and indeed the stealing him in the first instance, were opposed by Father Austin, as being an unnecessary incitement to Sir Charles Trevillion's vigilance. Mac Cardwell, however, hated the latter with a deadly hatred. He had set his mind on restoring the heir of Pendyffryn—should he ever be restored—only as a bigoted Romanist.

At La Fleche, the Confessor took charge of poor William himself: and, with Doughty in company, proceeded towards the south. They lingered in a town some leagues from Marseilles, until Father Austin remitted his confederate some money.

There William, for whom a nurse was found at St. Macaire, remained, while his guardians proceeded to Marseilles, when the attempt to turn their merchandise into gold, put a final stop to the proceedings of this precious pair. Mac Cardwell, however, succeeded in getting himself transferred to the spiritual direction of his superiors at Rome.

'Did William go with him?' I inadvertently asked. Doughty looked at me earnestly: a strange expression of joy flashed in his

malignant eyes. There was yet something in his power. He guessed that I was come to gain information from him. The ready lie was instantly on his lip.

'William has been removed. He is no longer in France; but he is not in Italy. I am waiting till he is older to purchase my freedom at his hands.'

'You can hold no communication with any person,' I said, 'unless permitted by the authorities here: it was with much difficulty that I, who came openly to work, got leave to speak with you.'

'I do not go openly to work; I have means of communication which you know nothing about.'

'You will gain nothing,' I replied, 'by defiance, except, perhaps, a severer infliction of punishment.'

'There can be none more severe,' he said: 'death would be a reprieve; but by death you would close the only lips which have power to give the information you seek. It is not impossible to break such chains as mine: others have been released by judicious interference. If you are wise, and sincere in desiring to recover this boy, exert yourself in my favor, and he shall be forthcoming. Some of the father's wealth might be well bestowed in such a case. I ask no other reward than my liberty.'

I assured him that neither Sir Charles Trevillion nor myself would act in the manner he proposed—that the last thing we should do would be to defeat, for our own purposes, the ends of justice. 'Lady Trevillion,' I added, 'is now beyond the reach of a heartless conspiracy: we do not fear to accuse her betrayers and bring them to punishment. No government but what will aid us in the restoration of an unoffending child.'

His answer was a laugh of the most satanic meaning, which, as I turned away, gave emphasis to these words: 'You will find the grave of him you seek in the cemetery at Bourdeaux: if you had procured me my liberty, I would have showed it you myself.'

This was, indeed, an astounding conclusion to my hopes; but the malicious asseverations of a disappointed wretch did not deter me from prosecuting my search. I proceeded to Macaire.

The information I got there was disheartening, and partly corroborated the last words of Doughty. An old *cure* of the place remembered the child, and knew something of the woman

who had him in charge. A small sum of money had been left with her for the child's use, and she waited four months expecting the return of those persons who entrusted him with her. Her name, he said, was Gironde; she had, soon after, gone to live with a daughter whose husband was a gardener, and resided either in the neighborhood of Bourdeaux or Niort.

Not a little alarmed, I set forward again; hope led me toward Niort, which was much nearer to Macaire than Bourdeaux, which, if I had obeyed my fears, I should have first sought. I was right in preferring the dictates of a guide, which, if she sometimes deceives, is at least always encouraging. Not far from the river, on which is situated that retired little town, in one of the prettiest habitations imaginable, I found the fair daughter of Madame Gironde. On inquiring for the mother, I was told she had gone to market with fruit. I ventured to ask if she had not a little boy left under her care: the young woman replied in the affirmative, adding, that he always accompanied her mother, whenever the weather was fine.

She sent a *garçon* to show me the market-place, and, from our conversation on the road, I had little fear of having to repair to the cemetery at Bourdeaux.

He pointed out the gardener's stall; it was the best, and most tastefully arranged, in the place. But its greatest attraction was a beautiful boy, with the eyes—as Mary Trevillion would say—the large lustrous eyes of Clotilde.

Full of glee and activity, he was sorting the fruit, helping himself to what best suited his taste, and occasionally serving the customers, while a remarkably fine looking woman, the ostensible *propriétaire*, regarded his infantine performances with smiles of approbation and pride.

Stifling my emotion, I stood by her side, and inquired the price of some cherries; but, observing me to be more attracted by the child than the fruit, she, without answering my question, took off his straw hat, stroked back the rich curls from his face, and asked me if he was not quite charming.

I warmly expressed my admiration, and inquired if she had heard nothing of the persons who placed him under her care.

She was startled, but no way confused, and readily made answer, that she had never heard from them since.

'I knew nothing of them at the time,' she said, 'but that one was a priest called Father Mathias. The dear boy seemed to me to be delicately nurtured; and, though you now see him assisting in a market, poor little love, for his pleasure, all his habits, when he came to me, were those of the *noblesse*.'

I could no longer restrain myself; but catching the dear boy in my arms, and embracing him heartily, told her I had come from his parents, who were suffering the greatest anxiety, not knowing at that moment if he were dead or alive; and commending, as she merited, the healthful and happy and extremely neat appearance of her charge.

'Ah, Monsieur!' she replied, 'he fares as we do, and the husband of my daughter loves him as his own. But the clothes, Monsieur, are not of our buying. Some little time since,' she subjoined in a whisper, 'one, who charged us not to mention her name, but who was a mother to the orphan and a friend to the poor, passed through this country, *incog.* as they call it. She saw her *pensionnaire*; and, on hearing his story, gave me money to dress him and send him to school. She also promised to inquire for his parents. But misfortune has since overtaken herself.

'Alas! poor Madame has been too confiding; and, as we are told, too much of a heroine. But, let her faults be what they may, she has the prayers of the poor, and the voice of the fatherless is raised up to bless her. She was loved very dearly in this country, at least. From the banks of the Loire to the source of the Garonne, all hearts were her own. We, however, know in comparison little about her. Go into Normandy—inquire at Rosni—you will hear of her there.' *

Gironde then opened the shirt collar of the child, and bade me remark the whiteness of his neck.

'You must,' I said, 'present him to his father. You must come with me to Nantes, where his mother is staying, and receive from them both the thanks so much your due, for the

* This is a true anecdote of the unfortunate Duchess.

preservation of their darling.' She was perfectly willing; indeed the mention of the journey was alone what could reconcile her to the loss of her charge. She expressed a lively wish to make acquaintance with his mother.

I gave her the shortest possible time to get ready, as I was impatient to report progress at Nantes; and the good dame being active as willing, her preparations were promptly completed; so that, in less than two hours after my arrival at Niort, I was retracing my journey, with all the speed of success.

CHAPTER XXVII.

I SHALL be silent as to the overflowing joy of Sir Charles Trevillion when it was my happiness to restore him his son; neither will I dwell on the mother's tearful ecstasies, when she held the precious child to her heart; still less describe—if it were in my power—the smiles with which Mary rewarded my success. They would have repaid me had I traversed the globe, or served a seven years' apprenticeship to earn them.

Gironde, I need not say, came in for her share of gratitude; and, being substantially rewarded, the noble peasant returned to a home which is, I trust, as much the abode of love, charity, and content, as when such virtues were its only possessions.

William clung to her to the last; but a variety of sights and scenes, the playfulness of his sister, and his subsequent journey—till the eve of which Gironde remained—reconciled the affectionate child to her loss, and to the nurse who had hitherto attended his mother.

I could not prevail upon Sir Charles to take one step, previous to leaving Nantes, toward the recovery of the St. Aubin estates. The evidence of the process by which Lady Trevillion was induced to relinquish her rights, would have annulled, without much trouble, the iniquitous assignment. But her husband could not bear to bring her again into collision with Austin, or to make public the impositions by which she had been duped. He was sick at heart of France, and shrunk (as he would from the bite of a serpent) from any allusion to the authors of his misery. I, on the contrary, was eager to bring them to the end they deserved, to publish their crimes, and to prove, not only to the world but to themselves, that they were thoroughly detected. But the feelings of the husband

were different. He wished nothing more than the quiet possession of his happiness—the enjoyment of his renewed comforts. ‘Let me,’ he said, ‘return to England in peace—let me rest on my present restored blessings—let me forget, in the renewal of domestic confidence and the recurrence of home occupations, that I ever left that home—that it ever was a scene of duplicity. I wish for no interest elsewhere. I would not accept these St. Aubin estates if they were offered to me to-morrow.’

Perhaps he is right. I endeavor to think so, and to reconcile myself to his patient endurance in the prospect of future vengeance on the vile offenders. If the father of the heiress will not contest her rights, the future protector of our little Mary may do so if he pleases.

We returned to England; but not at first to Pendyffryn. A medical friend, whom Sir Charles consulted in London, advised his detaining Clotilde elsewhere, rather than take her to Cornwall too soon. He hired a house in the neighborhood of Worthing, and the first friend he received there was the invaluable Doctor Bentley.

It is not my province to enlarge on the blessed results of this visit; so I shall only observe, that Clotilde received from him those counsels for which her heart so much yearned. Quietly and progressively her conversion was established, and whatever excitement was likely to ensue from a change so portentous, his judicious influence served to allay. At length, with mental and bodily health renovated, she recovered her strength of mind and cheerfulness of temper. She sincerely desires to become acquainted with the grounds of that religion so conscientiously adopted. She reads—she examines—she compares for herself; and, if a difficulty occurs, she inquires of her spiritual pastor, who, not satisfied with placing the staff in her hand, unweariedly directs her to its use. And now, decidedly a Christian in faith as in profession, she knows that it is like the sun to the understanding—that the higher it goes, the more it enlightens—the more it brings to fruition every good and perfect seed: that it not only guides her to everlasting bliss—though she knows it cannot render her deserving of that bliss—but fits her for the enjoyment of it by purifying her soul: that it is a balm, distilled from the tree of life, which is also the tree of knowledge—not merely meant to ease the anguish of the sufferer; but to

cure, to heal, to bind up afresh! In the restored confidence of earthly friends—their forgiveness—their affection—she is assured that Protestants are Christians, not only in *name*, but in *practice*. The seared heart yields to such influence—is grateful—is happy—is filled with peace, with that faith which—to fill a heart capacious of happiness, with peace the most perfect—she seeks at the footstool of God, in the *alone* mediation of the *One* oblation *once offered*.

But my active occupations are gone, and I feel my incompetency in detailing any others: suffice it to say, that an autumn spent in Scotland braced whatever was relaxed in the moral or intellectual health of all parties. Coming from scenes of suffering and terror to one of peace and security, the force of such a contrast could not but place the religion adopted by Clotilde—her reformation from error—in the most advantageous point of view; while the unpretending goodness of Lucy Melville acted as a sedative upon any bursts of enthusiasm that might agitate the feelings of the convert; nor could there be an anodyne more truly efficacious. Surrounded by affection, treated with confidence, prized as a recovered jewel, Clotilde yields to the genial influence which waits her grateful acknowledgment. She is an object of esteem with the numerous relations of her husband; while that husband, having drank deeply of the bitter cup mixed by himself, feels its corrective influence, and confesses, with thanks, that the salutary effects of a medicine so severe were not purchased too dearly.

Mary is, at length, persuaded that both brother and sister can manage for the future without her. And once more, under the influence of hope, I am arrived at Melville Park, for the purpose of rendering it a worthy, and I trust a happy, abode for her, who, as amiable in person as in mind, would transform a desert into a paradise.

§§§§.

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